

**Undergraduate Academic
Assessment Plan Jewish
Studies 2012 2013**

Jewish Studies

College of Liberal Arts
and Sciences

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Jewish Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Undergraduate Academic Assessment Plan

Mission Statement

Enter your mission statement here. See page 2 of the “Developing an Undergraduate Academic Assessment Plan” guide.

Mission Statement

To foster Jewish literacy—including familiarity with cultural productions from the time of the Bible until today—among all University of Florida students.

To teach the fundamentals of Jewish Studies as an interdisciplinary field with a variety of methodologies.

To promote critical thinking among students so that they understand how social and political transformations within the larger world have impacted Jewish society and culture throughout history.

To train students in the written expression of ideas and concepts about Jewish history and culture.

To support training at all levels of Hebrew by supporting students’ attending summer Ulpan in Israel.

To stimulate internationalization of the curriculum by supporting a semester abroad program with Haifa University and other institutions of higher learning in Israel.

To bring to campus outstanding scholars from universities across North America, Europe and Israel to share their latest findings with faculty, students and the local community through in-class lectures, small seminars and on- and off-campus public lectures.

To inculcate the brightest ideas of intellectual inquiry and human values.

To promote ethnic and gender diversity.

To help students understand their place in the universe via the perspective of a particular ethnic group.

To help set the intellectual foundation of students to inquiry, critical thinking and dialogue.

This mission statement is in line with the mission of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and that of the University of Florida, focusing on teaching, discovery, and application of the results of research to benefit the greater good.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Skills You Will Acquire in the Major (SLOs)

Content

1. Identify, describe and define the Jewish experience (including minority and diasporic communities within a comparative framework).
2. Examine transformations of Jewish communities over time and space.

Critical Thinking

3. Identify and explain the significance of language in assessing Jewish culture(s).
4. Evaluate and apply effectively the significance, quality and veracity of information (both primary and secondary) in the literature.

Communication

5. Articulate research results clearly and effectively in accepted style of presentation

Curriculum Map

Curriculum Map for:

Jewish Studies _____

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences _____

Key: Introuced

Reinforced

Assessed

Courses SLOs	Course1 JST 2930 Intro to Jewish Studies	Course2 JST 3930*	Course3 JST 4936**	Additional Assessments
Content Knowledge				
#1	I	R	A Final Test	Final test according to track (Holocaust studies, Israel Studies, general)
#2	I	R	A Final Test	Final test according to track (Holocaust studies, Israel Studies, general)
Critical Thinking				
#3	I	R	A Final Test	See attached form.
#4	I	R	A Final Test	See attached form.
Communication				
#5		R	A Final Test	See attached form.

*JST 3930 is the course number for any one of the following electives: Holocaust Studies, Modern European Jewish History, or Secular Jewish Culture. Students must choose one of these electives as shown in the semester plan. ** JST 4936 is the course number for any one of the following electives: Judaism and Politics or Israeli Society, students must choose one as shown on the semester plan.

Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle Chart

Assessment Cycle for: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation:

End of spring term

Improvement Actions:

Fall term

Dissemination:

December

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Content Knowledge							
#1		Not collected	Not collected	X	X	X	X
#2		Not collected	Not collected	X	X	X	X
Critical Thinking							
#3		Not collected	Not collected	X	X	X	X
#4		Not collected	Not collected	X	X	X	X
Communication							
#5		Not collected	Not collected	X	X	X	X

Information has been gathered each year from Secular Jewish Culture (JST3930) and has been the basis for significant changes in the curriculum particularly those who teach as guest lecturers in the class. This plan is now put into effect; it includes on-going information gathered through Secular Jewish Culture plus special tests conducted with students completing the Israel Studies track and the Holocaust Studies track components of the major.

Methods and Procedures

SLO Assessment Matrix

The SLO Assessment Matrix is new for the 2012-13 Academic Assessment Plans. We have populated the matrix to the extent possible with the information we have available. Please complete the matrix.

Assessment Method - For each SLO, please enter the assessment method you are using – exam (course, internal, or external), project, paper, presentation, performance, etc.

Measurement – list the measurement procedure you use for this outcome. It can be a faculty-developed rubric with the minimum acceptable level identified, an exam score and the minimum passing score, or other measurement. **Required for 2012-13: Include at least one example of a rubric used to assess an SLO.**

SLO Assessment Matrix for 2012-13

2012-13 Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Measurement Procedure
1. Identify, describe and define the Jewish experience (including minority and diasporic communities within a comparative framework).	Final test	Rubric based on faculty evaluation
2. Examine transformations of Jewish communities over time and space.	Final test	Rubric based on faculty evaluation
3. Identify and explain the significance of language in assessing Jewish culture(s).	Final test	Rubric based on faculty evaluation
4. Evaluate and apply effectively the significance, quality and veracity of information (both primary and secondary) in the literature.	Final test	Rubric based on faculty evaluation
5. Articulate research results clearly and effectively in accepted style of presentation	Final test	Rubric based on faculty evaluation

Assessment for Holocaust Studies Track.

The Holocaust Studies track within the Jewish Studies major conveys an understanding of the causes, course, and aftermath of the Holocaust from the standpoint of secondary studies in the social sciences and primary sources ranging from government records to personal testimonies. It also brings students to

think about the problem of representation in literature and the visual arts. It thus enhances multidisciplinary critical thinking skills while improving skills concerning written and spoken argument.

By the time they finish the program, students should be conversant in these issues and also the related issue of contemporary genocide and human rights abuses. To assess the program track's success, students will answer the two of the following broad essay questions depending on what classes they have taken:

1. Explain the causes of the Holocaust by examining any or all of the following: The Jewish problem in European history; anti-Semitism in modern Europe; the course of World War II.
2. Explain the range of Jewish responses to interwar persecution and the Holocaust itself ranging from Western to Eastern Europe and in the US, including assimilated Jews, Zionists, and communists. What factors regarding Jewish identity and politics helped to determine Jewish responses?
3. Explain the problem of representing the Holocaust in literature and the visual arts. Is it true that the Holocaust as "the unspeakable" cannot be represented at all? What are the moral problems regarding the representation of the Holocaust?
4. Assess the problem of postwar justice and the Holocaust in different parts of the world from Europe to Israel to the US. How have prosecutors and courts approached the idea of justice and the Holocaust? How have they succeeded and/or failed in their aims.
5. Discuss current explanations regarding mass murder during World War II ranging from Nazi "desk-murderers" to the killers on the ground to ordinary Germans. Are we to assume that killers were predisposed to undertake their actions? That they simply followed orders? Or that they were conditioned somehow by the conditions of wartime to act as they did?

The ability to answer these questions thoughtfully will allow us to assess the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills that student have gained, as well as the degree to which they have mastered the major questions of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Rubric for assessment.

The essays should have the following elements.

1. Does the essay reflect a factual knowledge of the complex causes of the Holocaust and the problems of representation of the Holocaust and human rights abuses in a variety of disciplines
Can the student assess arguments within more than one discipline concerning major questions of the Holocaust, human rights and genocide, and the problems of representation ranging from criminal law to memorials?
2. Can the student think and write critically and in a well organized and argued fashion
Relevant faculty will read the essays for these elements, then make assessment as to the degree to which our program must be adjusted to meet our aims better.

Assessment for Israel Studies Track.

The Israel Studies track within the Jewish Studies major is a diverse program exploring Israeli society, politics, and culture from a range of disciplines, including: anthropology, history, literature, political science, and sociology, contextualizing the study of Israel from the standpoint of Jewish history and within the modern Middle East. To assess the program track's success, students will answer two of the following broad essay questions depending on what classes they have taken. The approximate length of each essay would be 1000 words.

1. Some scholars argue that that current Israel is a very different polity than envisioned by the builders of the Israeli state and society. Please explain this argument, by referring to the vision of the founding fathers of Zionism and the main attributes of current Israeli society.
2. Explain the main divisions in contemporary Israeli society. Outline the historical development of each division, their significance today and elaborate on the interdependence of some of these divisions.
3. What are the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts?
4. Different scholars have different opinions whether Israel should be classified as a democracy. Please outline the different arguments in this debate and explain your own position.
5. Outline the work of three generations of Israeli writers, since the state's establishment. What are the common themes in the writing of each generation of authors, and what are the differences between generations? How do socio-historical developments reflected in their writing?

The ability to answer these questions thoughtfully will allow us to assess the knowledge and analytical tools students have gained, as well as their critical reading and thinking.

Rubric for assessment

Grading the essays will be based on the following elements:

1. Does the essay reflect basic factual knowledge of Israel, as it is presented in the courses offered at UF?
2. Can the student critically assess the existing controversies in the scholarly literature about the history, sociology, and politics of Israel?
3. Is the essay well organized and the arguments clear?

Relevant faculty will read the essays for these elements and will grade them according to the following

Grading rubric:

Grading Rubric of final essay – Israel Studies

SLO	Excellent	Good	Basic	Rudimentary	Insufficient	POINTS
1. Knowledge of Israeli history, society, and politics (40%)	Excellent command of Israeli history, society, politics, or literature [36- 40 points]	Above the average command of Israeli history, society, politics, or literature [31-35 points]	Only moderate command history, society, politics, or literature [26-30 points]	Minimal knowledge of Israeli history, society, politics, or literature [21-25 points]	Knowledge of Israeli history, society, politics and literature does not exist or based merely on media reports [0-20 points]	
2. Critical assessment of existing literature (40%)	Extensive knowledge of the existing scholarship on Israel and the controversies in this literature; excellent ability to evaluate and critically analyze it. [36- 40 points]	Considerable knowledge of the existing scholarship on Israel; above the average competence to analyze it. [31-35 points]	Demonstrates some knowledge in the existing scholarship on Israel; provides some analytical arguments. [26-30 points]	Minimal familiarity with the existing scholarship on Israel without proven ability to analyze them critically [21-25 points]	Not familiar with major scholarly themes in the field of Israel studies [0-20 points]	
3. Clarity and articulation (20%)	Provides well-structured and very clear arguments, and logically analyzes evidence to support conclusions [18-20]	Provides acceptable arguments and reasonably analyzes evidence to support conclusion [17-18 points]	Provides some clear arguments but conclusions are only vaguely supported by logically connected evidence [15-16 points]	Arguments are vague but still understandable; evidence lead only tangentially to conclusions [13-14 points]	Arguments are not clear at all; evidence presented do no lead to any coherent conclusion [0-12 points]	
TOTAL						____/100

Major course themes include the diversity of political perspectives in the Hebrew Bible, the high degree of Jewish self-government during the middle Ages and early modern world, the impact of emancipation on Jewish self-government, and the subsequent diversity of political perspectives among Jews depending on place of residence. Before both exams, students receive four study questions which emphasize those key themes which are then tested directly on the exams with both objective and essay questions. In addition, the student papers are assessed in part by the degree to which they refer to and build on the central course themes. At the end of the semester, we hold a discussion where I ask students their central takeaway points from the class. Based on this input and the detailed questions on the evaluation form, I adjust the class content for the next offering.

In addition to the direct measures outlined above, we will also use indirect assessments. These indirect measures are: the number of majors participating in the University Scholars Program.

Assessment Oversight

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