INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared on behalf of the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. It has been designed both as a source of information in its own right and as a guide to other sources of information. It is hoped that it will be particularly useful to students when they first arrive in Oxford, but they are advised to keep the booklet, since it may be of considerable help throughout the period of their work.

Please read the booklet carefully now.

Comments and criticisms of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies, Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford.

ORIENTAL STUDIES AT OXFORD

Among studies in the humanities, Oriental Studies is unique in introducing students to civilizations that are radically different from the Western ones which form the basis of the curriculum in most schools. The field embraces the study of Oriental cultures from prehistoric times to the present. More than half the world's population belong to Oriental civilizations studied in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. People in the West are becoming increasingly aware of these civilizations through travel, the diversification of social and ethnic groups, and rising general interest. The Faculty's courses offer the opportunity to learn in depth about the modern and ancient traditions of these cultures.

The courses present both the major traditions of the regions studied and, in most cases, their modern developments. All courses include language, literature, history and culture, and there is a wide range of options in such fields as art and archaeology, history, literature, philosophy, religion, and modern social studies.

Through its long-standing traditions and more recent gifts Oxford has unique resources for Oriental Studies. The Bodleian Library has a magnificent collection of Oriental books and manuscripts built up since the seventeenth century. The Oriental Institute, opened in 1961, is the centre where most teaching is done, acting as a focus for everyone working and studying in the field; it has a lending library of some 80,000 books. There are also institutes for the Modern Middle East, for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, for Modern Japanese Studies, and for Chinese Studies. Adjacent to the Oriental Institute is the Ashmolean Museum, which houses superb collections of objects used in the teaching of most branches of Oriental Art and Archaeology and also has very fine libraries devoted to these subjects. The Griffith Institute, housed in the Museum, has unique resources for Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies.
JEWSH STUDIES IN OXFORD

Oxford has been an important centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies since the sixteenth century. There are unrivalled collections of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books in the Bodleian Library. Outstanding scholars have held a number of different positions in Hebrew and Jewish Studies in the University and students from all over the world come to Oxford for both undergraduate and graduate studies. The Leopold Muller Memorial Library of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, housed in the Clarendon Institute Building, also contains invaluable Hebraica and Judaica collections.

As the disciplines of Hebrew and Jewish Studies have developed, different approaches and fields of study have evolved, ranging from the study of the classical Hebrew language and the Hebrew Bible to rabbinic, medieval, early modern and modern Jewish history, culture and society. Lectures, seminars, and classes in all these areas are taught both in the Oriental Institute and in the Clarendon Institute Building which are located in the heart of central Oxford.

The MSt in Jewish Studies offers a broad and intensive approach to the study of Jewish history and culture from antiquity to modern times, combined with the study of Modern or Biblical Hebrew or Yiddish.

The Academic Year

The academic year runs from October to June and is divided into three academic terms: Michaelmas (early October to early December), Hilary (mid-January to mid-March) and Trinity (late April to end June), and two vacations. “Full terms” are eight-week periods during which lectures are given. Students are normally expected to be in Oxford from 0 - 9th week of each term. The dates of the academic year 2016-2017 are:

Michaelmas Term: 10 October - 2 December
Hilary Term: 16 January - 10 March
Trinity Term: 24 April - 16 June

REQUIREMENTS

Students may choose one of two courses:

Track A (with dissertation):

Unit (i) Three terms of either Biblical Hebrew, or Modern Hebrew, or Yiddish. Written examination will take place at the end of Trinity Term.

Unit (ii) Two options, one option to be taken in Michaelmas Term and one option to be taken in Hilary Term. For options examined by an essay, two essays of 2500 words each must be submitted for each option.
Unit (iii) A thesis of not more than 15,000-words (excluding bibliography), on a topic selected in consultation with the candidate's supervisor and approved by the Faculty Board. Applications for such approval should be submitted to the Faculty office by Monday of Week 0 of Hilary Term.

**Track B (without dissertation):**

Unit (i): Three terms of *either* Biblical Hebrew, *or* Modern Hebrew, *or* Yiddish. Written examination will take place at the end of Trinity Term.

Unit (ii): Four options to be taken in Michaelmas Term, Hilary Term or Trinity Term. Options examined by essay must be taken in Michaelmas or Hilary Term. For options examined by an essay, two essays of 3000 words each must be submitted for each option.

Courses offered in 2016-2017

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Jewish History 200 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.

This course covers the political, social, economic, and religious history of the Jews from 200 B.C.E. to 70 C.E. The set text will be Josephus, The Jewish War, but students will also be expected to learn how other literary sources, archaeological material and religious texts can be used to understand the history of this period. This course will be examined by a three-hour written examination to be held at the end of Trinity Term.

Jewish History 70 CE - 500 CE

The course will examine the main issues in the history of the Jews in this period in the Roman empire and in Babylonia, introducing students to the techniques required to use the most important sources of evidence, including archaeology, inscriptions, Roman historiographical and legal texts, and Christian writings, as well as the rabbinic texts of late antiquity. This course will be examined by a three-hour written examination to be held at the end of Trinity Term.

Jews in Early Modern Europe, 1492-1789

This course sets out to examine certain exemplary features of Jewish history and culture of the early modern period, which for the purposes of this course will range from the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century. David Ruderman has described the early modern period as a key moment in Jewish history that should be regarded as representing more than a transition from the Middle Ages to modernity. We shall examine his proposition by means of a number of case studies drawn from diverse authors whose works and writings belong to different geographical localities and mentalities. We will consider the extent to which Jewish history and culture reflected that of the wider society, paying particular attention to the interaction between Jews and Christians. The course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

Jewish Liturgy

Jewish rituals and readings for home and synagogue are most commonly studied from an historical point of view, in order to understand their authorship and development. This course will focus primarily on the traditional liturgy and on how it encapsulates biblical themes and rabbinic thinking and uncertainties about the world. We will consider key scriptural scenes and their midrashic interpretations, define some of the core ideas of the sacred narrative, and trace their language and motifs in liturgical passages. This will enable us to see how central rabbinic ideas are explored in the liturgy in occasionally subversive ways, and how the prayer book uses biblical motifs to interpret human experience from birth to death. This course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

Modern Jewish History

A survey course covering the period from the mid-eighteenth century to the Second World War. The course aims to provide an overview of the Jewish experience as a minority group in Europe and Russia, introducing students to the main themes, ideologies and movements of modern Jewish history. Among the topics examined are emancipation and the Enlightenment, Jewish politics, migration, antisemitism and the Holocaust. This course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.
Modern Hebrew Literature, 1880-Present

From Psalm 137 to the contemporary graphic novel, constantly flowing and shifting affiliations of language, place and identity have shaped the development of Hebrew literature across centuries. In recent years, scholarship on Modern Hebrew literature has reconsidered the teleological “diaspora to nation” narrative that once dominated Modern Hebrew literary historiography, thereby opening its study to include a wider range of authors and a more expansive map of Hebrew literary circulation and reception. This course offers a chronological and thematic overview of Modern Hebrew literature from the late nineteenth century to the present day and examines, in particular, figures and themes of linguistic, cultural, geographical liminality in Modern Hebrew literature; the relation between Hebrew literature’s “minor” status on the global literary map and its own politics of inclusion and exclusion; as well as the ongoing discourse on “centres and peripheries” in Modern Hebrew literature. The course readings will address as well the politics of multilingualism and translation, the relation between nation and diaspora, and themes of trauma and displacement that continue to preoccupy Hebrew writers. Reading knowledge of Hebrew is not required but students who are able to read the original Hebrew are encouraged to do so. This course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

Israel: State and Society, 1882-Present

The history of modern Israel can be viewed as a narrative of state and society-building against a backdrop of immigrant-absorption: the challenge of bringing Jews of many different persuasions to live together for the first time in 5000 years in a modern nation-state, while simultaneously confronting the reality of an indigenous population within its territorial bounds and “imagined community” and other external interests and opposition to this new country. Correspondingly, this syllabus has been organized with eight units as departures on the theme of the “aliya” (lit. ascendance), a major Zionist historiographical category — which will be problematized in our discussion — that has been used to periodize the makings of modern Israel during the Yishuv. I have adapted this framework to include both the pre-state and post-state period, to treat relevant topics and groups that have been marginalized in the traditional history and historiography of Modern Israel, and to demonstrate both the opportunities and challenges facing the Israeli state and her society. Through the use of both primary and secondary source literature, we will investigate these themes and explore continuity and change over time. Lastly, students will have the opportunity to contribute to this evolving framework through their own discussions and research papers. This course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism

The aim of this course is to consider the historical, theological, and social motivations behind the development of the three major religious movements of Modern Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. The focus will fall on their emergence in the nineteenth century in Western Europe. The subsequent development of Progressive and Orthodox forms of Judaism in America will also be studied. In addition, the division of Orthodoxy into a modernist and traditionalist camp will be examined particularly with reference to Anglo-Jewry. A number of primary texts will be examined through the course requiring advance preparation and students will be expected to make a short oral presentation on selected topics. The course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.
Holocaust: From History to Memory

This course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

Zionism and its Critics

This course will examine the proponents and opponents of the ideology of Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, from the late nineteenth century to the present. The course title reflects the central theme of the class: the inherent dialectic of contestation—both internal and external—of Zionist thought over the course of its short, but important history. The heterogeneity and dynamism of this debate will primarily be explored through a close reading of primary source texts (and other media representations) of major thinkers and movements, in their own words. The course will be examined by means of two pre-submitted essays.

Languages at Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels:

Biblical Hebrew Modern
Hebrew Yiddish

All language courses are examined by three-hour examination to be held at the end of Trinity Term.

2016-17 Teaching Staff:

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel
Prof Martin Goodman
Dr Stephen Herring
Dr Sara Hirschhorn
Prof Adriana X Jacobs
Prof David Rechter

Prof Alison Salvesen (on leave 2016-7)
Dr Jeremy Schonfield
Prof Joanna Weinberg (on leave MT)
Dr Khayke Beruriah Wiegand
Mr Gil Zahavi
Dr. Zoe Waxman

Michaelmas 2016