HISTORY OF JUDAISM

Guidelines for Area

The History of Judaism area seeks to provide the student with synoptic knowledge of Jewish religious thought from the Hebrew Bible through the modern period. The program is designed to provide the student with a sound grounding in the foundational texts of each period—Biblical, Rabbinic (Talmud, Midrash), Medieval (Philosophy and Kabbalah), and Modern. Knowledge of these texts is required of all students regardless of the period in which he or she will ultimately concentrate his or her studies. Similarly, all students will be expected to attain a reading knowledge of scholarly Hebrew; knowledge of other languages will be required in accordance with the subject matter of one’s field of specialization. Integrated within the curriculum of the Divinity School, the program encourages the student to enrich his or her understanding of Judaism as a religious phenomenon through studying other traditions.

The History of Judaism area offers Ph.D written examinations. Concentrators in the area are required to take at least two of these examinations, with the other one or two examinations taken from other areas of study at the Divinity School. The examinations may, with permission of faculty, be modified to accommodate the particular academic needs of the students.

Examination HJ1: Rabbinic Thought and Theology in Late Antiquity (Professor Fishbane)

General Examination for Non-Specialists

I. Primary Texts (these texts are to be prepared in translation, with select texts in Hebrew for History of Judaism students)

   A. Mishnah
      (translations of Danby or Neusner)

      Berakhot ch. 1-9; Shabbat ch. 1-2; Pesahim ch. 1, 9-10; Yoma ch. 10; Sukkah ch. 1, 3-4; Rosh Hashana, ch. 1, 4; Taanit ch. 1-2; Megillah ch. 1-2, 4; Kiddushin ch. 1; Baba Qama ch. 1, 3; Baba Metzia ch. 1; Baba Batra ch. 8-9; Sanhedrin ch. 1,4; Abodah Zarah ch. 1, Abot ch. 1-4.

   B. Midrash

   Tannaitic Period

2. **Sifre Deuteronomy** (Yale Judaica series; Hammer trans.), selections related to Deuteronomy 6; 15-16; 32.

Amoraic Period
1. **Genesis Rabba** (Soncino trans.), selections related to Genesis 1; 3; 12; 15; 22; 28; 32
2. **Leviticus Rabba** (Soncino trans.), selections related to Leviticus 1; 12; 23.
3. **Pesikta de-Rab Kahana** (Braude and Kapstein trans., JPS ed.), choose 3 chapters.
4. **Song of Songs Rabba** (Soncino trans.), proem; selections related to Songs 1:1-3; 3:1; 8:1.
5. **Midrash on Psalms** (Yale Judaica series; Braude trans.), selections related to Ps. 1; 9; 19.
7. **Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan** (Yale Judaica series, Goldin trans.), selections.

C. Talmudic Literature
Selections to be chosen related to Mishnah selections and to selected theological passages.

D. Liturgy
1. Selections from Daily and Festival and High Holiday Prayerbooks
   Introduction and 5 selections.

Secondary Literature:


Budick and Hartmann, eds. *Midrash and Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. (selections; essays by Fishbane; Stern; Kugel; Heinemann)


Fraenkel, J. Darkhei Ha-Aggadah ve-Ha-Midrash. Yad La-Talmud, 1991 (selections)


Menn, E. *Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) in Ancient Jewish Exegesis: Studies in Literary Form and Hermeneutics*. 1997 (recommended).


Rubenstien, J. *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999


Examination for Area Specialists in Late Antiquity

I. **Primary Texts.** All texts listed above to be done in the original languages and from critical editions where these exist. In addition, students are responsible for passages dealt with in the literature studied. A selection of primary passages are to be mastered for a sight translation, exegesis, and analysis.

Candidates are expected to add further selections to the Midrashic Literature noted above, as well as to select passages from *Lamentations Rabba*, *Pesikta Rabbati*, and *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*. Selections from *Tosephta* and *Jeralem Talmud* will be assigned.

II. **Secondary Literature.** All texts given above, plus those listed below. The sources in the two specially selected chapters to be analyzed from Urbach’s *The Sages* are to be prepared in the original language. Selections from Qumran tests and *Heikhalot* literature will be assigned.

III. Special books and articles will be added in accordance with the student’s particular area of interest.

---

**Examination HJ2: Medieval Jewish Thought and History** (Professor Robinson)

**HJ2: History of Judaism, Medieval**

The medieval exam requires the student to demonstrate expertise in medieval Jewish thought set in a broad historical and cultural setting. Emphasis is on the developments of philosophy, kabbalah, and exegesis in relation to classical rabbinic Judaism and
contemporary trends in Islam and Christianity. Non-specialists are responsible for the primary texts in translation read and discussed during lectures and seminars as well as the secondary sources listed below. Specialists are responsible for the same primary texts in the original language together with a more extensive secondary bibliography. All students must prepare the titles in categories I, II, III, IV, along with one of V, VI, VII.

I. Historical Background


II. Philosophy and Science


Frank, Daniel and Oliver Leaman (eds.) *History of Jewish Philosophy*. Routledge, 1997: read chapters by Saperstein, Wasserstrom, Ben-Shamai


Relevant journals for further research: Da’at, Aleph, Jerusalem Studies in Jewish
Thought, Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Maimonidean Studies, 'Iyyun

III. Sufism and Kabbalah


Relevant journals for further research: Kabbalah, Da’at, Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought, Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy

IV. Exegesis


Collected essays for further research: *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, ed. B. Walfish, Haifa, 1993; *The Bible according to its Interpreters: Sarah Kamin Memorial*, ed. 

V. Language and Literature


The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of al-Andalus, eds. Maria
VI. Polemics and Disputations


VII. Rabbinic Literature and Rabbinic Culture


---------- “Legislation and Responsa Literature,” in *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardi*


Examination HJ3: Modern Jewish Thought (Professor Mendes-Flohr)

Background:


Primary Sources:

Precursors:


*Mendelssohn and the Berlin Haskalah*:


*Nineteenth Century Religious Thought*:


*Twentieth Century*:


________. *Philosophical and Theological Writings*. Translated and edited by Paul W.


*The American Scene:*


*Post-Holocaust Theology*


*Feminist:*


*Post-Modern Trends:*


Baltimore:

