



Hebrew & Jewish Studies

Please visit the Faculty of Oriental Studies website at:
www.orinst.ox.ac.uk

For the latest University prospectus and information on fees and scholarships please contact: Undergraduate Admissions Office, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.

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email: undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk,
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Faculty of Oriental Studies

Hebrew & Jewish Studies at Oxford

Oxford has been an important centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies since the sixteenth century, when the Regius Professorship in Hebrew was established by Henry VIII in 1546. There are unrivalled collections of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books in the Bodleian Library. The Jewish collections there were founded in 1600, making it the richest treasury of manuscripts and books related to medieval European Jewish civilisation in the world.

As the disciplines of Hebrew and Jewish Studies have developed, different approaches and fields of study have evolved and the University's courses in these fields have constantly been revised to keep up to date with recent developments. We offer a broad range of subjects, starting with study of the classical Hebrew language and the Hebrew Bible, and ranging through all other aspects of ancient, medieval, early-modern and modern Jewish history, culture and society. The University's posts in the Faculty of Oriental Studies reflect this diversity and together form the Oxford University Hebrew and Jewish Studies Unit, housed in the Oriental Institute. The Unit's staff offer an exceptional quality and breadth of expertise to enable students to develop areas of particular interest.

Students from all over the world come to Oxford for undergraduate studies. There are two courses taught at undergraduate level; Hebrew Studies (Q480), and Jewish Studies (QV91). Jewish Studies is primarily focused on the history, religion and culture of the Jews from biblical to modern times while Hebrew Studies focuses on language, literature, culture and history. The courses are designed to appeal to applicants from diverse backgrounds and with different interests, ranging from the Hebrew Bible to modern Israeli politics, from the developments within Judaism at the time of Jesus and the Talmud to the history of Jews under Islam and in modern Europe, and from the Dead Sea Scrolls to modern Hebrew poetry. Students are encouraged to examine Jewish societies, texts, ideologies and institutions both on their own terms and in relation to surrounding societies and cultures.

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Applicants are not required to have any previous knowledge of the Hebrew language or script, or a background in Jewish Studies, before they make an application for undergraduate studies at Oxford. It is helpful to have a language under your belt at advanced level, but this is not an essential requirement and students who apply have often studied very different subjects at A-Level. The first three terms comprise intensive class instruction in the Hebrew language in all its main phases, leading to the first public examination (Prelims) which is identical for both the B.A in Hebrew and the B.A. in Jewish Studies. It is thus easy for applicants for the B.A. in Hebrew to transfer to the B.A. in Jewish Studies, and vice versa, after three terms, if they wish.