

2/9/79

PROPOSAL FOR A JUDAIC STUDIES MAJOR

A. Identity of the Program

1. Title: Judaic Studies
2. Degree: Bachelor of Arts
3. Beginning Date: September, 1979, with the first degree to be awarded December, 1979.
4. Description of the Course of Study:

Judaic Studies has become an increasingly popular field in North American universities in the last ten years, leading to the creation of a variety of programs. The approach we have adopted follows closely that of established programs at public and private universities such as the University of California at Los Angeles and Brandeis University. At the same time, the design of the program is in keeping with existing faculty resources.

The proposed major in Judaic Studies is modeled on the premise that Judaic Studies, like other area studies programs, is interdisciplinary in nature and should enable students to acquire both a broad overview of Jewish civilization throughout the ages and an in-depth encounter with a specific period and discipline within the field. The disciplines included in the Judaic Studies Program at SUNY-Binghamton are history, philosophy, sociology, political science, literature, Near Eastern languages, German and Spanish. Students will be encouraged to take a second major in a particular discipline in order to acquire disciplinary training to accompany Judaic Studies. A double major would also give students a wider context in which to situate the history and culture of the Jewish people. Those students not wishing to double major will be strongly urged to take cognate courses outside of Judaic Studies in a particular discipline.

The major is built on our experience of the last five years administering a certificate program in Judaic Studies. In the last two years, an increasing number of students have been proposing independent majors in Judaic Studies through the Innovational Projects Board (IPB). We have necessarily had to construct guidelines for advising these students how to plan their majors and these guidelines form the core of our proposal. In essence, we are not so much proposing a new program as systematizing and institutionalizing the current situation in which we are de facto supervising students majoring in Judaic Studies.

When the certificate program was established, we believed strongly that no training in Judaic Studies could be complete without some language facility in either Hebrew or another relevant language. This belief has motivated our inclusion of a strong language component in the proposed major. (sm)

5. Curriculum Design:

Regulations of Harpur College limit any major program to no more than 15 of the 31½ courses required for the B.A. degree. Majors must also

satisfy the all-college requirements by taking two courses in each of the three divisions (Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences) and four additional courses from divisions outside the major. Majors in Judaic Studies will have no difficulty fulfilling these requirements since they will take courses in both the humanities and social sciences.

The Judaic Studies Committee has approved the following set of requirements for the bachelor's degree in Judaic Studies:

The major will consist of ten courses totaling 40 credits plus language competence through the level of Hebrew 104.

Core Course Requirement

Judaic Studies 125 (also History 152A): Jewish Civilization: Biblical Period  
Judaic Studies 126 (also History 152B): Jewish Civilization: 2nd Temple Period

Judaic Studies 127 (also History 153A): Medieval Jewish History  
Judaic Studies 128 (also History 153B): Modern Jewish History

Topics Courses

Students will take five topics courses from the list published each semester by the Judaic Studies Committee. The following are topics courses which have been offered over the past few years and which should be offered with some regularity in the future. New courses are added from time to time. The list is arranged by subject.

History

Judaic Studies 182C (Hist. 298N) - Modern Antisemitism  
Judaic Studies 182D - The American Jewish Experience  
Judaic Studies 182F - Jewish Messianism  
Judaic Studies 182G - The Holocaust  
Judaic Studies 175 (Hist. 196M) - The Rebirth of Israel

Literature

English 150A - Jewish Literature from Old World to New  
English 175G - American Jewish Literature  
Hebrew 260 - Topics in Biblical Literature  
Hebrew 261 - Hebrew Folk Literature  
Hebrew 261B - Literature of the Hasidim  
Hebrew 262 - Alienation in Modern Hebrew Literature

Philosophy and Mysticism

Philosophy 126A - Philosophy and Old Testament Religion  
Judaic Studies 182J (Hist. 196F) - Modern Jewish Thought  
Judaic Studies 182P (Hist. 196Z) - Jewish Mysticism and Hasidism

Political Science

Political Science 125 - Middle East  
Political Science 129 - Politics of Israel  
Political Science 181S - The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Rabbinics and Law

Judaic Studies 181D - Introduction to Rabbinic Judaism  
Judaic Studies 181E - Legends of the Jews  
Judaic Studies 182L - Women in Jewish Law

Sociology

Judaic Studies 188 (Sociology 188) - Sociology of the Jews  
Judaic Studies 182Q (Sociology 189) - Jewish Politics

Independent Study - Judaic Studies 199

Students may design their own individualized topics course for two or four credits under the supervision of a faculty member.

Concentration Requirement

Students will take two of their topics courses in either one discipline or one period of Jewish history. The concentration should be chosen in the junior year as preparation for the student's senior thesis. The following are examples of possible concentrations a student might propose based on existing courses:

The Modern Period (period concentration)

Judaic Studies 128 (Modern Jewish history -- core course)  
Judaic Studies 175 (The Rebirth of Israel)  
Judaic Studies 182Q (Jewish Politics)  
Judaic Studies 198 (Senior thesis on the rise of Jewish nationalism)

Jewish Literature (disciplinary concentration)

Judaic Studies 128 (Modern Jewish history -- core course)  
English 175G (Jewish American Fiction)  
Hebrew 262 (Alienation in Modern Hebrew Literature)  
Judaic Studies 198 (Senior thesis comparing the theme of alienation in American and Israeli literature.)

Medieval Jewish Thought (disciplinary concentration)

Judaic Studies 127 (Medieval Jewish history -- core course)  
Judaic Studies 182L (Women in Jewish Law)  
Judaic Studies 182P (Jewish Mysticism and Hasidism)  
Judaic Studies 198 (Senior thesis on the image of women in Jewish mysticism)

Senior Thesis

In the second semester of their senior year, students will enroll in Judaic Studies 198 (4 credits) and will write a thesis under the supervision of a faculty member. All students and faculty working on senior theses will meet several times together at the end of the semester so that students can present their work for criticism and suggestions.

### Language Requirement

All students must acquire proficiency in Hebrew language up to the level of Hebrew 104. This requirement may be satisfied by successfully completing Hebrew language courses at SUNY-Binghamton or the equivalent. The requirement may also be satisfied by an examination to be conducted by the Hebrew instructors. In special circumstances and with the consent of the Judaic Studies Coordinator, students may substitute another relevant language such as Yiddish for the Hebrew language requirement.

### Certificate in Judaic Studies

The existing certificate program will continue but the requirements will be modified. Students will still be required to take the four core courses and four topics courses but will not be required to fulfill a language requirement. The purpose of the certificate program will now be primarily to certify that a student has gained both broad and specific background in Judaic Studies. The revised requirements will better suit the needs of many of our students who wish to take a program in Judaic Studies but are concentrating in another field.

### Study Abroad

Students are encouraged to supplement their training in Judaic Studies at SUNY-Binghamton by spending a year or semester on a SUNY program in Israel. SUNY-Albany currently administers the year program in Israel. SUNY-Binghamton is in the process of proposing a semester program to be implemented in spring, 1980 at the University of Haifa. Judaic Studies majors will have priority in acceptance to the Binghamton semester program. The creation of a SUNY-Binghamton program in Israel, although it will not be limited to SUNY-Binghamton students, will add considerable resources to the Judaic Studies Program at Binghamton and will further justify expansion into a major.

## B. Long-range Planning

1. Relation to University Master Plan: "(State University of New York) must continue to extend and expand the diversity of our educational services to our citizenry... Alternatives which shift delivery via conventional disciplines toward newly emerging, interdisciplinary and problem-relevant areas... should continue to be encouraged and actively supported." (Master Plan of 1976, p. 8)

As a relatively new interdisciplinary field which is attracting an increasing number of students and faculty, Judaic Studies as a major will contribute significantly to the diversity of education at SUNY-Binghamton.

2. Relation to campus master plan: "(Harpur College) recognizes... that new needs and directions continually arise from the greater society itself; and part of Harpur's mission is to develop new and rigorous programs in order to maintain its position in the vanguard of new learning techniques and opening fields of knowledge...(Judaic Studies) is designed to provide directed, intensive study of the history, traditions and accomplishments of the Jewish people and of the Judaic influence on Western civilization... It is also possible that the program may eventually grow into a genuine major, offering work up to the Bachelor's degree." (Binghamton's Master Plan for 1980-81 and 1984-85, pp. 11-12)

When the Judaic Studies Program was established as a certificate program, the intention of Harpur College, as stated in the campus master plan, was to test student and faculty interest in order to determine whether a major in Judaic Studies could be justified. The evidence of the last five years of student demand for both courses and degrees in Judaic Studies (see below, "Student Demand" D. 3) suggests that the time is ripe to implement the hope expressed in the campus master plan.

3. Relation to existing or projected programs of the institution: Judaic Studies is part of a variety of ethnological programs at SUNY-Binghamton (Afro-American, Latin American and Caribbean and Southwest Asian and North African Area Studies). It is also part of a configuration of other interdisciplinary programs such as the Southwest Asian and North African program and the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies. The Afro-American, Latin American and Medieval programs offer Bachelor's degrees in their respective fields and therefore the upgrading of Judaic Studies into a major program follows the precedent for other successful programs on the Binghamton campus. The program cooperates closely with the Southwest Asian and North African program on courses and events of common interest. There are also close ties to the history department. If the current discussions of a religious studies program at SUNY-Binghamton bear fruit, the Judaic Studies program would be an active and enthusiastic partner in that enterprise.
4. Relation to existing programs at other institutions: Reflecting the upsurge of interest in Judaic Studies nationally, many universities in upstate New York have instituted programs in Judaic Studies. Cornell and Rochester are two private universities offering majors in Judaic Studies (or in Near Eastern Studies with an emphasis on Judaica). The strengths of these two programs are in ancient and medieval Judaism and it might be mentioned that both depend heavily on the teaching of one faculty member. In the SUNY system, the only major currently offered is through the Judaic Studies Department at Albany. Examination of the SUNY-Binghamton faculty and library resources in Judaic Studies demonstrates that with the exception of Albany, SUNY-Binghamton has greater breadth and depth than any other university, public or private, in upstate New York. SUNY-Binghamton even compares favorably with universities in New York City such as Columbia which have traditionally been considered strong in Judaic Studies.

The Binghamton program would complement the SUNY program at Albany since its strength is primarily in the modern period in Jewish history, sociology and thought. In the final analysis, however, the various existing programs in Judaic Studies are not in competition since they are responses to the needs and desires of the current student population. The proliferation of baccalaureate programs in Judaic Studies is an exciting prospect for it will mean greater scholarly communication between institutions and the consolidation of a discipline whose initial stages of development have surely justified its further growth.

#### C. Resources

##### 1. Faculty and Staff

The existing faculty resources in Judaic Studies are adequate in order to offer a comprehensive and varied program. The following list is of those faculty members who have consistently participated in the program in the last few years and will be participating in the future. (Complete Curriculum Vitae are attached.)

History

David Biale, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Judaic Studies:  
core courses on Biblical, second temple and modern periods;  
medieval and modern Jewish thought

Gerald Kadish, Associate Professor of History: ancient Near Eastern  
mythology

Helen Rivlin, Professor of History: Rebirth of Israel, Antisemitism

Norman Stillman, Associate Professor of History and Arabic: Medieval  
Jewish History; Jews in the Islamic World

Sociology

Arthur Liebman, Professor of Sociology: Sociology of the Jews, Jewish  
Politics

Political Science

Don Peretz, Professor of Political Science: Politics of Israel,  
Arab-Israeli Conflict

Language and Literature

Marcia Falk, Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Languages and English:  
Hebrew language and literature

Isidore Friedland, Adjunct Lecturer in Yiddish: Yiddish language and  
literature

Samuel Morell, Associate Professor of Hebrew: Hebrew language and  
literature

Yedida Stillman, Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Languages: Hebrew  
language and literature; Jewish folklore

Adjunct Lecturers

Rachel Biale, Adjunct Lecturer in Judaic Studies: Women in Jewish Law

Raphael Groner, Adjunct Lecturer in Judaic Studies: Biblical and  
Rabbinic literature

The following is a list of faculty members who have occasionally taught  
courses related to Judaic Studies but whose participation is uncertain  
for the future because of other commitments. Efforts will be made to  
release them from these obligations to ensure their continued participa-  
tion. Also included are faculty who have indicated interest in participating  
in the future but have not offered courses in the past.

Avner Arbel, Associate Professor of Management: Israeli Economics

Sandra Cypess, Assistant Professor of Spanish: Latin American Jewish  
literature

Richard Dekmejian, Professor of Political Science: Arab-Israeli conflict

Frederick Garber, Professor of Comparative Literature: Literature of the Holocaust, American Jewish literature

Leon Goldstein, Professor of Philosophy: Jewish philosophy and Old Testament Religion

Sheldon Grebstein, Professor of English and Dean of Harpur College and the School of Arts and Sciences: American Jewish literature

Richard Kerr, Associate Professor of Spanish: Literature of the Sephardim

Saul Levin, Professor of Ancient Languages: Bible, Hebrew philology

George Stein, Professor of History and Vice President of Academic Affairs: Hitler's Europe

The list of regular and occasional faculty suggests that the Judaic Studies Program is well-staffed to offer a major. All of the periods of Jewish history are covered by qualified teachers and Hebrew language and literature are taught at both elementary and advanced levels. Additional strengths lie in Yiddish, modern Jewish history, sociology and political science. Particular weaknesses exist in literature and philosophy. In both of these areas, qualified instructors are already on the faculty but are committed to other teaching obligations. We hope to be able to free them to participate more fully in these fields.

Secretarial Services currently available are adequate for the expanded program.

## 2. Facilities

Library facilities are surprisingly strong for a university of Binghamton's size and age. Approximately 8,000 volumes in Hebrew are on the shelves with an additional 12,000 volumes in other languages. Of special importance is the Margolis Holocaust Collection (365 titles) which is part of the permanent reserve collection. At 20,000 total volumes, the Judaica collection at SUNY-Binghamton ranks as a medium-size collection in comparison to other universities and is adequate for the needs of an undergraduate major. Additional resources are available within an hour's drive at Cornell University. Since, however, the library budget for collection development has virtually disappeared in the last two years, it will be necessary to apply for an outside grant if we wish to build the collection in areas where it is weak. The Judaic Studies Program has adequate office space, although there is need for a room to house a Judaic Studies library and reading room. The administration has promised to provide such a room this spring (1979).

## 3. Expenditures

The expansion of the current certificate program into a major will not require any substantial new expenditures. The budget for the Judaic Studies Program is \$1,337 (supplies and expenses), \$400 (temporary service money for outside lecturers), and \$3,000 (for two additional courses taught by adjunct lecturers). Continuation of this budget in appropriate categories will suffice for the new program.

The Judaic Studies Program has also made efforts to secure outside funding for special projects. For example, the Program was awarded a grant for a Conversation in the Discipline from SUNY-Central which will make possible a conference in April, 1979, on "Jewish Marriage and the Family." The Judaic Studies coordinator has applied for a grant for improvement of undergraduate education to design and implement a course on the Holocaust on European Jews. He will also be applying for a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture to rent films and other instructional materials for that course.

D. Students

1. Identity

The Judaic Studies Program is open to all students in Harpur College regardless of religion or ethnic background. Since it will naturally attract a high percentage of Jewish students, it is worth noting that an extraordinarily large number of students at Harpur College are Jewish and the interest in this program is correspondingly great.

The Judaic Studies Program has also had considerable success in attracting members of the local community to its courses. Although these students form a small percentage of the total enrollment in Judaic Studies courses, the program considers this contribution to the local community of high importance.

2. Counseling

The coordinator of Judaic Studies currently serves as the advisor to all students enrolled in the certificate program or who have proposed independent majors in Judaic Studies. He would serve as advisor to all those regularly enrolled in the major. Other Judaic Studies faculty are available for counseling on specific areas pertaining to their expertise.

3. Demand

Since the certificate program was started in 1973, 25 students have enrolled for a certificate; nine have already been granted and sixteen are in progress. Since 1975, 22 students have declared their intention of completing an individual major through the Innovational Projects Board in Judaic Studies. Of these, three have received their Bachelor degrees and 19 are in progress. The significance of the last statistic is that the vast majority of the students interested in a major in Judaic Studies have come to the program in the last year. Moreover, the number of students desiring a major over a certificate has increased markedly in the last year. In brief, a growing number of students are enrolling in the Judaic Studies Program and their preference is clearly for a major. If the rate of growth of the past year is any indication, it would be reasonable to extrapolate a future enrollment in a Judaic Studies major of between 40 and 50.



The student demand for a Judaic Studies major clearly grows out of the increase in enrollments in Judaic Studies courses since the inception of the program. The following are the total enrollments for Judaic Studies courses including Hebrew and Yiddish language since Fall, 1973 (breakdowns according to courses can be found in the appendix).

Fall 1973: 248  
Spring 1974: 201

Fall 1974: 280  
Spring 1975: 184

Fall 1975: 221  
Spring 1976: 254

Fall 1976: 349  
Spring 1977: 238

Fall 1977: 512  
Spring 1978: 427

Fall 1978: 678

It is therefore abundantly clear that significant student demand exists for courses in Judaic Studies and that the growth in this demand justifies the implementation of a full-fledged major in the field.

#### 4. Employment Possibilities

Judaic Studies is a liberal arts field and it makes no pretensions of preparing students for a specific career. A high percentage of students in Judaic Studies plan careers related to the Jewish community such as communal social work and education. A major in Judaic Studies constitutes valuable background for such professions. The program also offers supervised internships in Jewish communal institutions. A small number of students envision academic careers in Judaic Studies and the program tries to serve their needs as well. All students are encouraged to gain significant training in at least one other area to broaden their education and intensify their disciplinary preparation. A large number of students double-major, most frequently in Judaic Studies and History or Judaic Studies and Sociology.

#### 5. Articulation and Transfer

No specific preparation is required of high school students for a Judaic Studies major. Preferable are students with some language competence in Hebrew. The program has succeeded in attracting a large number of such well-prepared students and will continue recruitment efforts through the admissions office at SUNY-Binghamton. Brochures will also be sent to specific high schools with strong Hebrew and Judaica programs. Students desiring to continue in Judaic Studies finish the program with excellent language training as well as general academic preparation for graduate study.

E. Evaluation

1. Academic Quality and Cost Effectiveness

Harpur College continually evaluates all its programs for academic quality and the Judaic Studies Program will also be subject to this evaluation. The Judaic Studies Committee, composed of two faculty from the Social Sciences, two from the Humanities, the Judaic Studies Coordinator, a member of the Dean's office and three students, supervises the program and continually evaluates courses and requirements. The budget of the program is under the supervision of the Dean's Office.

2. Graduate Programs

At present, there is no graduate program in Judaic Studies and none is planned for the foreseeable future. The History Department is currently considering the possibility of instituting a graduate field in Jewish history which could very likely help supplement the program with trained teaching assistants.