

## **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **M.A. Program in Jewish Studies Department of Jewish Studies Rutgers University**

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This Handbook is a guide to the procedures and requirements of the Graduate Program in Jewish Studies at Rutgers. Students should also refer to the general regulations that appear in the Catalog of the Graduate School – New Brunswick.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES WEBSITE:**

<http://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/>

<http://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/graduate>

#### **GRADUATE SCHOOL – NEW BRUNSWICK (GSNB) WEBSITE:**

<http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/>

## **GRADUATE DIRECTOR**

The **Graduate Director** is a Jewish Studies faculty member who is responsible for advising graduate students as they select their courses, plan for exams, and undertake their thesis research. The Graduate Director also offers support for students in career planning beyond the M.A. in Jewish Studies program.

## **M.A. IN JEWISH STUDIES**

### **Admission Requirements**

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree, with a GPA of at least a 3.0, and solid verbal and reading scores on the GRE exams.

Application materials should include:

- A completed online application
- Official transcripts from previously attended institutions
- GRE scores
- Two letters of recommendation
- A personal statement (1-2 pages)
- A writing sample (recommended)
- Application fee

### **How to Apply**

Applications are filed online: <http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu>. The deadline for fall admission is **June 30th** and for spring admission **December 1st**.

Students who miss the deadline may begin their studies with non-matriculated status (see below).

## **M.A. Degree Requirements**

### **Degree Requirements (30 credits):**

- Nine (9) 3-credit courses (as delineated below)
- One (1) 3-credit M.A. thesis (see below, Final Assessments)
- Comprehensive exam (see below, Final Assessments)
- Language exam (see below)

**Courses:**

- Jewish History I (16:563:501) and Jewish History II (16:563:502)
- At least one course (beyond JH-I and JH-II) must be taken in each of the two time periods: pre-modern (i.e., ancient and medieval) and modern.
- At least two courses (beyond JH-I and JH-II) must be taken in two different disciplines from among the following: history, literature, religious text study, cultural studies, social science.
- No more than two courses may be taken at other universities, subject to the approval of the Graduate Director.
- No more than two graduate-level courses may be taken in other Rutgers departments, also subject to the approval of the Graduate Director.
- No more than two 300- and 400-level (i.e., upper-level undergraduate) courses taught at Rutgers by professorial-level Jewish Studies department faculty may be counted, with the requirement that additional work will be assigned to the student in order to receive graduate credit. Enrollment in these courses must be approved in advance by the Graduate Director.

**Final Assessments:**

*M.A. Thesis:* The 3-credit thesis, comprised of original scholarly research, will examine a particular subject in depth in an essay of 40-60 pages. The topic will be selected in consultation with the Graduate Director. The thesis will be supervised by two faculty members: a primary advisor and a second reader.

*Comprehensive Exams*

Students are required to take written comprehensive exams, one in a major field and one in a minor field, with the specific subjects to be determined in coordination with the Graduate Director, based on the individual student's interests and coursework. The exam will be designed and read by two faculty members, based on the major and minor areas.

The reading list and exam (for both the major and minor fields) will be designed by an individual faculty member; and then each exam will be assessed by two faculty members.

Approximate guidelines for the reading list are as follows:

- Major field: 8-12 books or c. 2400-3000 pages of reading
- Minor field: 5-8 books or c. 1500-2400 pages of reading

The books may include those already read by the student during his/her coursework. In addition, important articles may be incorporated into the reading list.

Students will be required to answer one synthetic question, from a choice of several questions, in a written take-home examination over the course of two weeks. The comprehensive exam will comprise c. 10-15 pages for the major field exam and c. 5-10 pages for the minor field exam.

Note: For both the M.A. thesis and the Comprehensive Exams, readers may include faculty members who hold associated or affiliated status in Jewish Studies, as long as they are a member of the Graduate Faculty at Rutgers.

### *Language Exam*

Students will be required to take a language examination to demonstrate proficiency in either a Jewish language (Biblical Hebrew, modern Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, etc.), or another language directly relevant to their field of interest, pending approval of the graduate director.

The language exam will have two sections: a grammar section and a translation section.

For the latter, the student will be given a text (of relatively short length) and will sit with a dictionary for two hours to produce an English translation. Where suitable (as in Modern Hebrew), a relevant newspaper or magazine article will be used. In other instances (as with Biblical Hebrew), a relevant primary source will be used.

The Graduate Director should have on file sample texts to present to graduate students in advance, so that they may practice for the exam and gain a better sense of what is expected from them.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Applicants and students interested in seeking financial support for their studies are encouraged to visit the website of the Graduate School:

<http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu/funding.shtml>.

In addition, limited merit-based scholarships are available for students enrolled full-time in the M.A. in Jewish Studies program. Students should contact the Graduate Director to inquire about such funding.

## **OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

**Language Placement Exam:** During the first semester of a student's enrollment, he/she will be required to take a language placement exam (in Hebrew, Yiddish, etc.). The purpose of the exam is for the faculty to gain a better sense of the student's ability and to determine which language courses the student may need to take during his/her academic program, en route to the Language Proficiency Exam.

**Registration:** Incoming students can register online with the prior approval of their class schedule by the Graduate Director. Course offerings for a given semester are posted on the web (<http://scheduling.rutgers.edu> or <http://registrar.rutgers.edu>). After registering, students must activate their registration by paying their term bill in full at the Cashier's Office (306 Administrative Services Building). In subsequent terms, students can register by telephone using the Rutgers Touchtone Telephone Registration System (848-445-1999), online ([registrar.rutgers.edu](http://registrar.rutgers.edu)), or in person.

**Full-time and part-time status:** For internal Rutgers purposes, full-time status is considered to be 9 credits of coursework per semester. Students also may pursue the M.A. degree as a part-time student (taking one or two courses per semester).

For federal financial aid purposes, however, 12 credits is deemed to be full-time study at the graduate level, no different than the guidelines for undergraduate level. Therefore, students should be aware that part-time status may affect the deferment of any undergraduate educational loans.

**Special Permission Numbers:** If a course is filled, a student must obtain a special permission number to register. The student should first contact the instructor for the course request permission to register. If s/he grants special permission, the Department Administrator will give the student a special permission number before classes begin, or the instructor will give it once classes have begun. Students wishing to enroll in any of these classes must fill out the appropriate forms and acquire the necessary signatures before the Department Administrator will provide a special permission number.

**Add/Drop Period:** There is a set period for adding or withdrawing from a course without financial or academic penalties. After this period, students may still withdraw

from courses, but their tuition will be affected and a “W” will appear on their transcript. The add/drop deadlines for each semester are posted in the course catalogue and circulated by the Graduate School.

**Prohibition on Rewriting Paper for Higher Grade:** The Graduate School has a strict policy prohibiting faculty members from allowing students who receive less than an A as a final grade to rewrite a final paper in order to improve their final grade.

**Incompletes:** Faculty members may grant students an Incomplete (IN) if the student requests additional time to complete her/his work, but if this option is available to one student, it must then be so for all the students in a given course. According to the guidelines of the graduate school, “IN” grades must be made up within a year. During this year, these incompletes are referred to as “temporary”; afterwards, they are usually converted (or “abandoned”) to “PINs”, or “Permanent Incompletes” – and can no longer be made up under ordinary circumstances. More than one Temporary Incomplete signals to the Graduate Program in Jewish Studies that a student might not be making adequate progress toward his or her degree. A student with two or more temporary incompletes on his/her overall graduate record will not be allowed to register for additional courses in Jewish Studies. Moreover, students should be aware that Incompletes can be seriously detrimental to a student’s chance of obtaining funding.

**Undergraduate Courses:** Graduate students may take up to 6 credits in undergraduate coursework (300- and 400-level courses), with permission of the Graduate Director. Students who have been approved to take such courses for graduate credit should request that a “G” be added to the course when they register. If the “G” needs to be added retroactively, the student must see the Graduate Director.

**Duplicate Course Registration:** Occasionally, different faculty may offer substantially distinct courses under the same course number. If, under these circumstances, students wish to register for a course that they have already taken, they may request approval from the Graduate Director by demonstrating the distinctiveness of the two versions of the course (usually through submitting copies of syllabi).

**Non-Matriculated Students:** Students who are not in the M.A. degree program in Jewish Studies may take up to 12 credits of coursework in Graduate Jewish Studies as “Non-Matriculated Students,” a status available through the Graduate School’s “Non-Degree Graduate Study Office” (848-932-7743). Interested students must meet with the Graduate Director and, if approved, must request permission from each course

instructor in order to be admitted to the course. Once such approval is granted, the non-matriculating student requires a special permission number to register for each course. If these students, after taking one or more such courses, then apply and are admitted to the Graduate Program in Jewish Studies, they may use these non-matriculated credits (to a maximum of 12 credits) toward their M.A. degree requirements.

**Transfer of Credits:** Students who have taken graduate Jewish Studies courses elsewhere during the last six years prior to matriculation at Rutgers may apply to transfer up to 6 credits.

**Excess Credits:** Any student who wishes to take more than 12 credits in a given semester must get the approval of the Graduate Director and the Office of the Dean.

**Appeals and Grievance Procedure:** A student has the right to appeal any action by a faculty member. He/she should first discuss the matter with the instructor(s) involved. If the matter cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should appeal to the Graduate Director. If the student or other parties to the issue are still dissatisfied, he/she may appeal in writing to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee members will either consider the matter themselves or constitute an ad hoc Committee of Review to resolve the matter. If the complaint is directed against the Graduate Director or another member of the Graduate Committee, those members will participate in the Committee deliberations, but will be excused before the committee votes. If the matter remains unresolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, it will be referred to the Dean of the Graduate School for final determination.

## **NON-ACADEMIC MATTERS**

**Student IDs:** Student photo IDs ("RU ConnectionIDs") for new graduate students can be obtained at any of the "RU Connection" offices. See [http://rci.rutgers.edu/~ruconxn/nbp/?page=content/firstyear\\_grad.php](http://rci.rutgers.edu/~ruconxn/nbp/?page=content/firstyear_grad.php) for a list of office locations. Students must have registered and paid their term bills prior to applying for their IDs, and have proof that they have done so. They must also bring with them a valid government-issued form of photo ID such as a driver's license or passport. RU ConnectionIDs can be used to gain access to Rutgers libraries, recreation centers, and computer labs, among other uses.

**Email:** To obtain an email account, students should see: <http://rucs.rutgers.edu/services/account/quick.html>. It is essential that students consult their Rutgers email account regularly (even if s/he has another account via gmail,

yahoo, hotmail, etc.), since official University announcements and messages from faculty members via the Sakai platform (used for course instruction) are all sent to the Rutgers email address.

**Jewish Studies Listserv:** All graduate students are registered on the Jewish Studies Graduate Students Listserv, which is used by the Graduate Director, Department Administrator, and other faculty members to distribute important program announcements.

**Parking:** Students can obtain parking permits online at: <http://parktran.rutgers.edu>.

## **THE GRADUATE PROGRAM AS A PROFESSIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY**

**Public Lectures, Faculty Seminars, and other Academic Events.:** Every semester both the Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and the Department of Jewish Studies sponsor a series of public lectures, faculty seminars, and the like. These talks are ideal ways to learn about the diversity of Jewish Studies, aid in the professional development of students, and network with other scholars. All students are therefore strongly encouraged to attend.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Rutgers University's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment:** The Department of Jewish Studies takes very seriously its obligation to provide an excellent education to students without harassment or discrimination and follows closely the University's "Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment" (Policy 60.1.12). Go to: <http://uhr.rutgers.edu/uhr-units-offices/office-employment-equity> (and follow the link near the end of the first paragraph).

We direct special attention to Section IV.B.3. of the policy, which begins: "Sexual relationships that occur in the student-teacher context or in the context of employment supervision or evaluation present special problems." Faculty and students alike are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entire document, again, with special attention to this section.

Campus resources include the following:

- Office of Employment Equity  
University Human Resources  
848-932-3020
- Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Support  
and Graduate Student Services  
Graduate School / 25 Bishop Place  
848-932-7747
- Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs  
83 Somerset Street / Old Queens Building  
848-932-8576

**Graduate School Personnel:** The office of the Graduate School, located primarily at 25 Bishop Place, offers additional services and resources to graduate students. To name just some of the key people you might need to contact (current February 2013):

Associate Dean Harvey Waterman oversees matters involving fellowships, scholarships and curriculum.

Associate Dean Barbara Bender oversees academic support and student services, including such issues as academic integrity, interpersonal conflict, student life, and the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP, see below).

Gary Buschhorn is the Business Manager; he coordinates all budgets and financial matters, including those regarding fellowships, tuition, and tuition waivers.

Barbara Sirman is the Administrator for Degree Certification and coordinates the certification of degrees, dissertation format, student files, grade changes, and status changes.

**Graduate Student Association (GSA):** The Graduate Student Association, of which all graduate students are automatically members, sponsors a variety of social and cultural activities for graduate students and represents their interests to the University and agents of the State through its legislative body. The GSA sponsors films, mixers, dances, theatre trips to New York, lectures, intramural athletics, and community action programs. The GSA represents individual students in difficulties with departments or administrative offices of the University and has increasingly assumed a lobbying role to speak for graduate student needs in such areas as housing, tuition policy, and financial aid. For more information, go to: <http://gsa.rutgers.edu/>.

**Teaching Assistant Project:** All TAs and even all graduate students are encouraged to become involved with the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP), run by the Graduate School. TAP is designed to promote excellence in undergraduate and graduate education at Rutgers. It offers an orientation for new TAs, workshops and courses throughout the year on teaching-related matters; videotaping and evaluation of TA performance for feedback and improvement; the TA Liaison Committee; and an array of publications. For more information visit their website:

<http://taproject.rutgers.edu>.

**Rutgers AAUP:** All Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants, in addition to regular faculty members, are represented by the Rutgers chapter of the AAUP/AFT (American Association of University Professors/American Federation of Teachers) in a collective bargaining process to establish salary and benefits during contract negotiations. More information about the union can be found at

<http://www.rutgersaaup.org/taga.htm>.

**Center for International Faculty and Student Services:** The Center coordinates services for international faculty, staff, students and scholars, including coordinating and monitoring the Students and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) program. The office assists with all matters of special concern to foreign students and serves as a referral source to other university offices and academic departments. Center staff members provide direct support with employment, immigration, and personal, family, financial and health care matters. In addition, the Center sponsors a variety of programs throughout the year, sponsors an orientation program and publishes a newsletter. For more information, see: <http://internationalservices.rutgers.edu/>.

**Career Services:** When students are nearing graduation, they may wish to consult with Career Services: <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/>. Note the special tab for Graduate Students: <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/gradservices.shtml>. A wide array of services is available.

**Counseling Services:** Rutgers University provides free counseling to graduate students who are enrolled full time or who pay the health care fee. There is a wide range of services available, including psychological counseling, peer counseling, and referral services. These programs are professionally staffed. For further information, go to: <http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/services/counseling>.