

Rutgers adds master's degree in Jewish studies



Dr. Nancy Sinkoff has been appointed the new chair of the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University.

by [Debra Rubin](#)
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Responding to student demand, Rutgers University will next year inaugurate the state's first master's degree program in Jewish studies.

The program is being offered by the Department of Jewish Studies, which already oversees New Jersey's only undergraduate degree program in Jewish studies.

The master's program hopes to attract 10 students in its first year, according to new department chair Dr. Nancy Sinkoff.

“The creation of the master’s program is a natural progression from the success we’ve experienced on the undergraduate level,” she said. “We are ready to rock and roll.”

The Jewish studies department currently has 20 undergraduate students working on degrees, and 47 others minoring in Jewish studies. Approximately 2,000 students took classes last year. It also offers a certificate in Jewish studies for Rutgers students enrolled in master’s or doctoral programs.

“Most obviously, there is a need since New Jersey is home to a very large and active Jewish community,” said Sinkoff, an associate professor of Jewish studies and history who has been with the department since 1998. “We’ve seen an increase in students over the years.”

The master’s program will offer an interdisciplinary approach encompassing the Jewish experience from biblical times to the present. With the addition in the coming year of Jonathan Gribetz, specializing in Jews of the modern Middle East, the department will have seven full-time faculty members.

“We have internationally renowned scholars with diversified backgrounds and solid expertise,” said Sinkoff. “We also have visiting scholars who come in to teach one or two courses as well as visiting professors here for extended periods and those in fellowships.

“It’s a creative and dynamic environment.”

Sinkoff specializes in early modern and modern East European Jewry. Focusing on the United States, her work particularly examines how East European Jews and their descendants understood themselves in their native lands and as they encountered the political, economic, social, geographic, and religious transformations in the modern societies in which they settled.

She said prospective master’s degree students will likely come from two streams: those in academia or recent graduates in other master’s or doctoral programs, or Jewish communal professionals.

The master’s program was established in part by an award from the School of Arts and Sciences’ Entrepreneurial Program. It was created last year to allow faculty to apply for grants and administrative support for innovative educational initiatives that generate new revenue streams. The Jewish studies department is under the auspices of the school.

The master’s program, which will receive funding and administrative support for two years, was one of four award recipients.

Applications may be filed at gradstudy.rutgers.edu. The deadline for fall admission is June 30.

<http://njewishnews.com/article/statewide/rutgers-adds-masters-degree-in-jewish-studies>

New prof joins department

Dr. Jonathan Gribetz will join the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University as an assistant professor. When he comes to the New Brunswick campus in the fall, he will become the department's seventh full-time faculty member.

Currently the Ray D. Wolfe Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, Gribetz will have a joint appointment in the university's history department.

He attended Harvard College and Columbia University, where he earned a doctorate last year.

Gribetz, who specializes in the study of Jews in the modern Middle East, will teach courses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jews in the Muslim world, Contested Jerusalem: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives, and Jewish Society and Culture II: the Early Modern and Modern Experience.

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