April 15, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: James F. Harris
    Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

FROM: Victor Korenman
      Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT: Proposal to Establish an Honors Program in Jewish Studies (PCC Log No. 04083)

At its meeting on April 15, 2005, the Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula, and Courses approved your proposal to establish an Honors Program in Jewish Studies. A copy of the approved proposal is enclosed.

This approval is effective in Fall 2005. The College should ensure that the new program is fully described in the Undergraduate Catalogue and in all relevant descriptive materials, and that all advisors are informed.

VK: sfm
Enclosure

Cc: Dr. Sylvester J. Gates, Chair, Senate PCC
    Dr. Mary Giles, University Senate
    Ms. Barbara Hope, Data Administration
    Dr. Phyllis Peres, Undergraduate Studies
    Dr. Charles Rutherford, College of Arts and Humanities
    Ms. Anne Turkos, Archives
    Dr. Linda Yokoi, Records & Registrations
THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

DIRECTIONS: Provide one form with original approval signatures in lines 1 - 4 for each proposed action. Keep this form to one-page in length. Forms and appropriate attachments should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs, who will assign a Log Number to each proposal. Also submit an electronic version of as much of the proposal as is possible.

DATE SUBMITTED  April 1, 2005

PCC LOG NO.

04083

COLLEGE/SCHOOL  ARHU

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM  JWST

PROPOSED ACTION (A separate form for each)  ADD  X  DELETE  CHANGE

DESCRIPTION (Provide a succinct account of the proposed action. Details should be provided in an attachment. Provide old and new sample programs for curriculum changes.)

Creation of departmental honors program in Jewish Studies. Program will involve: one Honors seminar plus additional course, and two semesters of guided thesis research.

JUSTIFICATION/REASONS/RESOURCES (Briefly explain the reason for the proposed action. Identify the source of new resources that may be required. Details should be provided in an attachment.)

With the success of the University and JWST in attracting excellent undergraduates with interests Jewish Studies, JWST has now has academically highly successful, talented students with interests in doing primary research. This program provides an organized opportunity to do this. It also helps recruit undergraduates who, every year, request such programs.

The net effect on the resources (particularly State Budget resources) is expected to be minimal.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

1. Department Committee Chair  

2. Department Chair  

3. College/School PCC Chair  

4. Dean  

5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required)  

6. Chair, Senate PCC  

7. Chair of Senate  

8. Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost  

DATE

3/11/05

3/11/05

3/24/05

3/28/05

4/15/05

4/15/05

VPAAP Rev. 3/1/04
Undergraduate Honors in Jewish Studies

I. Overview and Rationale

The Jewish Studies Program proposes a new Departmental Honors Program in Jewish Studies. The University of Maryland has been extremely successful at recruiting students with strong intellectual and cultural interests in Jewish Studies. We now have a strong, modestly sized body of Jewish Studies majors, many of whom come to campus with the equivalent of upper-level skills training while others have developed those skills while studying with us. The major gives undergraduates exposure to a broad range of sub-disciplines and fields of study within Jewish Studies, while allowing students to specialize within those fields. The Honors Program will allow majors who have the right combination of skills, intellectual and academic ability in their Jewish Studies and general coursework, and research interests to pursue independent research. The program will provide additional training and guidance in shaping a well-designed research program and in undertaking and writing the research project itself.

In keeping with the University’s requirements, the proposed program consists of 12 credits taken in the student’s third and fourth year. An Honors Seminar makes up three of the twelve credits, and the Honors Thesis another six. The remaining three credits are selected in an appropriate field in consultation with the advisor. Jewish Studies major requirements remain unchanged. However, successful completion of the Honors Thesis will fulfill the Major requirement of a semester-long research seminar generally met through enrollment in JWST 309, and we intend to submit JWST 408 for approval as a capstone course.

II. Curriculum

A. Catalog Description

The Honors Program in Jewish Studies is designed to encourage Jewish Studies majors with excellent grades and strong academic interests to pursue an individual research project of their own design, in consultation with and under the direction of an advisor. The Program consists of twelve credits taken in a student’s Junior and Senior years culminating in the writing of an honors thesis. Students who complete the Honors Program are deemed to have completed the research seminar requirement for the major, typically completed through JWST 309.

Junior Year: Students apply for admission to the Honors Program in the Fall of their Junior year, and, upon admission, enroll in the Honors Seminar (JWST 408) (3 credits) in the Spring of their Junior year. During this time students are expected to develop a general research plan to be approved by the prospective thesis advisor. Thesis advisors will generally belong to the regular or affiliate Jewish Studies faculty. Other faculty may serve as thesis advisor with the written permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.
**Senior Year:** In the Fall of their Senior year students select an upper-level course (3 credits) closely related to their research agenda in consultation with the advisor. This may include a regularly offered undergraduate course, independent study, in which case students are encouraged to apply for an Honors Option for that particular course. In addition, students may request permission to enroll in a graduate-level course to complete this part of their requirement. Students who enter the Honors Program with a clearly defined research interest may complete this requirement in their Junior year.

In addition, students take 6 credits of JWST 418: Honors Thesis Research, under the direction of their thesis advisor. Typically these will be divided between the Fall and Spring semesters. Students are expected to work out with their advisors clear goals that contribute to the thesis as a whole for each semester of thesis research, and will be graded each semester on the basis of having met those goals. In the second semester, the principal goal will be the completed thesis.

**B. Courses**

New courses to be developed:

JWST 408: Honors Seminar (3 credits). An in-depth exploration of a theme in Jewish history, literature, culture or thought. Course subject and readings will vary from year to year, but will generally cut across periods, locations, or disciplines. Students are expected to engage the course material critically and to use the seminar as an opportunity to develop an independent research agenda.

(Permission of Department Required)

JWST 418: Honors Thesis Research (3 credits, repeatable to 6).

**C. Special Criteria for Admission**

Admission to the Honors Program is limited to Jewish Studies majors who have demonstrated superior capacity for work in Jewish Studies. A prospective student should provide an application dossier consisting of the following:

1. Letter of application
2. Transcript (unofficial)
3. Sample of academic writing (typically a paper submitted during the student’s undergraduate career).
4. Letter of support from a member of the faculty.

Applications will be reviewed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in consultation with an advisory committee.

**III. Faculty and Organization**
The Honors Program in Jewish Studies supplements the Jewish Studies major, and will be housed in the Jewish Studies program. While Honors students work with a thesis advisor, oversight of the program is the responsibility of the Director of the Jewish Studies program or his/her designee as Director of Undergraduate Studies.

As of September 2005 the Jewish Studies program will consist of nine full-time faculty in Jewish Studies on tenured or tenure-track lines, with several others offering courses in a visiting or adjunct capacity. While nearly all of the permanent JWST faculty currently have tenure homes elsewhere (English, History, Philosophy, and School of Languages), the Jewish Studies program has oversight and discretion over its undergraduate offerings.

IV. Commitment to Diversity

Jewish Studies has a strong commitment to the teaching of diversity on campus. Our courses regularly meet CORE Diversity requirements. Honors Students will be encouraged to pursue research projects that explore human cultural, religious, ethnic and political diversity through the lens of Jewish history, literature, culture, and thought. Our courses draw students from across the student body, from every demographic group.

Because the Honors Program draws on an existing body of majors it cannot, by itself, be the basis for recruiting students diverse of backgrounds, although it may be useful in retaining excellent students from any background. The question of diversity can be more squarely met in a review of the composition of the Jewish Studies program as a whole. This is a matter currently under discussion as part of our departmental review process.

V. Resource Needs and Sources

A. Physical Resources

No new resources will be necessary. Jewish Studies has use of a Seminar room that can be used for the Honors Seminar. There are no new computing or library needs.

B. New Courses and Staffing

Two new courses will be necessary: the Honors Seminar (JWST 408) and Honors Thesis Research (JWST 418).

Serving as thesis advisor falls within the general duties Jewish Studies faculty undertake with respect to undergraduates and is in this respect little different than Independent Study or Directed Readings courses which our faculty regularly oversee.

Offering JWST 408, Honors Seminar, replaces one course that a member of the Jewish Studies faculty would normally offer. Teaching of the Seminar will be rotated among our faculty from year to year, and will therefore not pose a problem to our coverage of subject areas. Occasional conflicting demands on faculty teaching—within Jewish Studies or in the tenure home departments—can be worked out on a case-by-case basis.
A survey of recent offerings shows that we have sufficient empty seats, particularly at the upper level, to reallocate one three-credit course per year to an Honors Seminar will not place undue strain on our ability to meet course demand. Development of the Honors program is being undertaken as part of a broader rationalization of our Undergraduate offerings.

General advising and coordination of the program falls within the normal duties of the Director of Undergraduate Studies working with an administrative assistant. We anticipate a small Honors program and foresee no staffing difficulties.

No new costs in faculty, administration, or physical resources are foreseen.
Sample Syllabus for JWST 408, Honors Seminar.

JWST 408: Honors Seminar
Law and Identity in Jewish Culture

Introduction
1. Theoretical Overview: Law as discourse, law as model, law as means of control

Internalist legal discourses
3. Law and sectarian identity: the Dead Sea Scrolls
4. Rabbinic law (i): normative practice or utopian agenda?
5. Rabbinic law (ii): slaves, women, minors and the construction of non-Jewish Jews
6. Rabbinic law (iii): classicism, authority, and medieval and modern adjustments

Jews and law in society
7. Jews as subject in Roman imperial law.
8. Pact of Umar and the Jews in medieval Islam
9. Charters for “others” among us: Jews in medieval Christendom.
10. Legal emancipation of the Jews: the construction of Jews as citizens
11. Nazi Jewry laws and the underpinning of genocide

Sample Readings:
Y. Arad, et al., Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union.
M. Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages.
M. Halbertal, People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority
C. E. Hayes, Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud.
A. Linder, Jews in Imperial Roman Legislation.
N. Rouhana, Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State: Identities in Conflict.