Carleton College  
Jewish Life

Jewish life at Carleton is rich, active, and varied. We celebrate the entire Jewish liturgical year, from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot and everything in between. The College employs a rabbi, supports the active Jewish student organization, and provides a house with a kosher kitchen to serve as the Jewish student center. Shabbat is celebrated weekly with Friday night services and student-cooked dinners. Throughout the year there are study sessions, lectures, and social and community events, including those that take advantage of our proximity to the Twin Cities and its vibrant Jewish community.

High Holidays  Our services draw 100-150 new and returning students, faculty, and staff, and a number of townsfolk to the campus’s Great Hall. Carleton owns a Torah, which is dressed in holiday whites and read by students and faculty. Our rabbi officiates, with community participation, after which all are invited to enjoy catered meals. For Sukkot, students erect a sukkah and host a range of festivities, including a Friday night “Open Sukkah” to which students of all faiths are especially welcomed.

Shabbat  Friday night services are held weekly in the Jewish student house, led alternately by rabbi and students, and followed by Shabbat dinner. Students take turns cooking and baking challah.

Passover  For Pesah we hold two se’drin, the first led by the rabbi, with seating for more than 150; the second a smaller, but equally joyous student-led event. Catered meals are carefully prepared and served by dining services under the rabbi’s supervision. Students clean the Jewish house and prepare and serve meals for the entire week of Passover.

Holidays  Tu B’Shevat is celebrated with a “seder” of all kinds of fruits of trees. Student environmental activists are invited to lead a discussion. For Purim, Jewish students have teamed up with Hindus and Muslims to create an extravaganza complete with Purim shpiel, Klezmer music, and Bollywood dancing! Yom HaShoah is typically observed with a vigil, service, and speaker; some students also choose to drive to the Twin Cities (about 50 minutes) to attend the community observance there. Students have organized Yom Ha’Atzma’ut celebrations, and even as finals approach a Shavuot dinner with faculty-led blintz making draws a crowd.

Study and Enrichment  We have weekly informal Torah study led by the rabbi or a Jewish member of the faculty, at which pizza is always served. The Jewish Thought Reading Group meets several times a term, bringing together students, faculty and staff for in depth discussions of selected readings. Students and rabbi work together to plan a variety of educational events during the year, frequently bringing in speakers on topics of Jewish interest.

Social  The student organization Jewish Students of Carleton (JSC) receives funding from the Carleton Student Senate, and plans informal gatherings throughout the year including game nights, movie nights, and sporting events (the current name of the volleyball team is “The All-Stars of David”).

Israel  Carleton Jewish students have traveled together to Israel on Taglit-Birthright. Funding is made available to students pursuing internships or study opportunities in Israel, and in 2011 Judaic Studies professors will lead a student trip to Israel (see reverse side, under Judaic Studies). At Carleton, students, faculty, and staff explore their relationship with Israel in a variety of settings.

After Carleton  Jewish graduates of Carleton have consistently been among the interns at such programs as Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps, and Jewish Organizing Initiative (JOI).

A Jewish “Carl” will find many ways to nurture his/her Jewish identity on campus, working through the Jewish student organization and/or with the rabbi to initiate programming that addresses individual interests and needs.

Staff  Rabbi Shoshana Dworsky was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York in 1998. She served congregations in New York City and Portland, Oregon, and served as the Interim Associate Director of University of Michigan Hillel. She has been Carleton’s Associate Chaplain of Jewish and Interfaith Life since 2004.
Judaic Studies at Carleton invites students to explore historical and contemporary manifestations of Jewish civilization in diverse cultural contexts from the perspectives of many different modern academic disciplines. These include the study of Jewish history, thought, religion, literature, and socio-cultural experience. In addition, students may fulfill their Carleton language requirement with the four-term Modern Hebrew sequence offered through the Department of Middle Eastern Languages. No major or concentration is offered in Judaic Studies alone; however, students may petition for a special major in Judaic Studies or take a concentrated program within a major in Religion. Judaic Studies courses are offered on a regular basis by the Department of Religion. Other courses with a focus on Israel and its global Jewish heritage and connections are offered on a regular basis through the Hebrew program in English translation. Courses on Jewish cultural life and perception of Jews in different European countries are offered periodically through the German and Spanish departments.

Off Campus Study
Every year the Jonathan Paradise Israel Experience Fund provides up to three scholarships that can help students study in university or learning institute programs in Israel for an academic term or during the summer.

In 2009-10 Carleton initiated its first off-campus program in Israel: Faith and Fiction: Exploring Israeli National Identity. Professors Louis Newman and Stacy Beckwith taught linked Judaic Studies courses in the fall: The State of Judaism in the State of Israel and Discovering Literary Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. All students from these courses participated in a two-week winter break program in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Back at Carleton, they completed research projects culminating in a symposium on Israeli national identity during winter term. This program will run again in 2011-12. The application and interview process will occur in spring term 2011.

Courses (taught on a rotating basis)
Department of Religion
Patriarchs, Priests, Prophets and Poets (Hebrew Bible); Introduction to Judaism; Genesis; Contemporary Jewish Thought; Religious and Moral Issues of the Holocaust; Jews and the American Experience; The State of Judaism in the State of Israel.
Department of Middle Eastern Languages (in translation)
Personal and National Identity in Israeli and Palestinian Literature (a fall freshman seminar); Israeli Literature in the Middle East; Israel in A.B. Yehoshua’s Literature; Jewish Collective Memory; Discovering Literary Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Department of Middle Eastern Languages (in Hebrew)
Modern Hebrew Language Sequence; Group Independent Studies: Advanced Hebrew Reading; Hebrew for Holocaust Research.

Department of German
German/Jewish Literature.
Department of Spanish (in Spanish)
Jews in Spanish Fiction and Memory.

Faculty
Stacy Beckwith, Associate Professor of Hebrew and Director of Judaic Studies (University of Toronto BA; University of Minnesota MA, PhD), specializes in national history and collective memory in contemporary Israeli and Spanish literature, particularly in representations of historical Sephardic, or Spanish Jewish characters. Her edited volume, Charting Memory: Recalling Medieval Spain, examines a range of modern Jewish, Arab, and Hispanic memories of Iberian coexistence as expressed in ongoing traditions of literature, music, prayer, architecture, and name giving.

Louis Newman, John M. and Elizabeth W. Musser Professor of Religious Studies (University of Minnesota BA and MA; Brown University, PhD), specializes in the study of Jewish ethics and contemporary Jewish thought. He is the author of Past Imperatives: Studies in the History and Theory of Jewish Ethics; An Introduction to Jewish Ethics, and Repentance: The Meaning and Practice of Teshuvah, as well as co-editor (with Elliot Dorff) of Contemporary Jewish Ethics and Morality and Contemporary Jewish Theology.