About Spertus Institute

At Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership we create dynamic learning opportunities, rooted in Jewish wisdom and culture, that enable personal growth and develop skills for future community leaders.

Our programs are designed to help our students transform their lives and communities. Spertus advanced degree programs are uniquely flexible, allowing students to tailor their own rich and meaningful academic experiences. Exceptional faculty, mentors, and resources inspire new thinking with real-world application.

The Institute cultivates an atmosphere of lively discourse. We often hear from students and participants that their experiences at Spertus are inspiring and even transformative. That is by design, because the Institute pursues cutting-edge best practice in everything it does. This results in meaningful, important opportunities for personal and professional growth for constituents and communities.

Accreditation

Spertus is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604.

More Information

Visit spertus.edu for information about courses, certificate offerings, seminars, faculty, tuition, and upcoming events, as well as degree requirements, applications for admissions, and requests for transcripts.
Characteristics of Spertus Degree Programs

- Non-traditional programs geared toward busy, working adults
- Emphasis on applied learning
- Onsite, offsite, web conference, and online course offerings
- Distinguished international faculty
- Program support through expert library resource assistance and academic advising

Students at Spertus learn to:

- Develop critical thinking skills
- Apply knowledge of theory and content
- Understand and constructively engage with a variety of opinions, scholarly approaches, and resources
- Engage in ethical and responsible approaches to scholarship, professional work, and personal development
- Understand traditional Jewish thought, classical Jewish sources, and best professional practices, as well as how they can be applied in contemporary situations and in response to contemporary issues
- Develop the skills and passion for lifelong learning
- Develop a sense of community and participate in a community of learners.

Faculty

Spertus utilizes a combination of regular, adjunct, and visiting faculty in its degree programs. All Spertus faculty are chosen on the basis of three criteria: academic and professional competence and experience, teaching ability, and appropriateness to specific degree program goals, curricula, and student constituency.

Support Structures

Spertus provides a wide range of student services, academic advising, and financial aid services, including student loan processing and scholarship assistance for those who qualify. Students have access to the rich collection of the Asher Library. Some programs are supported by Spertus’ online learning management system, Desire2Learn.

Modes of Delivery

Courses are offered on-campus on a weekly basis or during intensive seminars. Select courses are offered through web conferencing, online, distance learning, or independent study. Some courses are offered offsite, as part of specific cohort schedules. The Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies (MAJPS) and its executive version (EMAJPS) are run on cohort models. All other programs are offered on a quarter-term system, which allows for flexible and asynchronous registration and start dates.

Degree Types

This program guide provides an overview of current degree offerings:

- Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (MAJS)
- Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies (MAJPS) and its executive version (EMAJPS)
- Doctor of Science in Jewish Studies (DSJS)
- Doctor of Hebrew Letters (DHL)

The Master of Science in Jewish Education (MSJE) and Master of Arts in Jewish Education (MAJE) are currently under review.
Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies

The Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies (MAJPS) and its executive version (EMAJPS) are models of learning and training for those working for and with the Jewish Community. Offered through Spertus Institute’s Center for Jewish Leadership, they combine essential professional skills development, concentration courses, and individualized study to advance students’ personal and professional interests. Run on a cohort basis, they offer the opportunity for students from a wide range of institutional and professional backgrounds to network, learn from one another, and create a vibrant community of practice. MAJPS and EMAJPS have strong mentoring components that foster professional development and the integration of coursework and professional work. The programs are offered through a combination of courses held on-campus, in intensive seminars, and through distance learning. Admissions requirements include a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Several years of Jewish communal professional experience is preferred.

MAJPS Sought Learning Outcomes

• Understand the key themes in Jewish communal life today
• Possess a grounding in classical Jewish thought and texts in these areas
• Understand the best practices in nonprofit management that most affect Jewish communal work
• Develop skills for critical self-reflection and career planning
• Integrate theory and practice in the professional environment
• Learn to work constructively with a diverse group of constituents and colleagues

MAJPS Course Requirements (45 quarter-hour credits)

• Jewish Studies and Professional Skills Courses (8 courses, 3 credits each)
• Concentration Area Courses (4 courses, 3 credits each)
• Individualization, including Mentoring and Capstone Project (9 credits)

MAJPS Core Course Titles

Jewish Studies for the Jewish Professional
This American Jewish Life
The Role of Israel in Jewish Life throughout the Ages
Working with People
Major Jewish Value Concepts
Models of Informal Jewish Education
The Aesthetics of Jewish Civilization
Becoming an Effective Jewish Leader

MAJPS Concentration Areas

Nonprofit Management
Jewish Studies

“The MAJPS program turned what I thought was just a job at a Jewish organization into a career helping my community thrive. I have never felt more committed to communal service.”

Lisette Zaid | MAJPS Alumna
Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Studies Curriculum

CORE Curriculum Courses

- Jewish Studies for the Jewish Professional
- Models of informal Jewish Education
- The Aesthetics of Jewish Civilizations
- Major Jewish Value Concepts
- This American Jewish Life
- The Role of Israel in Jewish Life
- Becoming an Effective Jewish Leader
- Working with People

Nonprofit Management Courses

- Strategic and Financial Planning
- Fundraising
- Fundamentals in Marketing and Communications
- Management and Supervision

Jewish Studies Courses

- Examples from a range of options:
  - The Bible and the Ancient Near East
  - The World of the Rabbis
  - Contemporary Jewish Experiences
  - Jewish Arts and Identity

Year-Long Mentorship

Capstone Project

Individualization
The Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (MAJS) is a sequenced, content-specific program that explores the evolving nature of Jewish civilization, the fundamental religious and intellectual outlook of Jews and Judaism, and the contributions of Jewish civilization to human civilization. The program is designed to provide inspiration and grounding for students who embrace and continue to explore Jewish heritage and Jewish life. Throughout the curriculum, students examine significant Jewish texts—a traditional and effective mode of Jewish learning to promote intellectual growth through discovery and inquiry. Admission requirements include a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education.

**MAJS Sought Learning Outcomes**

- Basic familiarity with the key periods and themes in Jewish history
- Understanding of the nature and development of Judaism as a religion
- Familiarity with the most important Jewish thinkers and personalities
- Familiarity with the central texts in Jewish tradition and history
- Understanding of the complex relation between Jews, Judaism, and the non-Jewish world
- Understanding of the challenges and possibilities facing Jews and Judaism throughout history and how Jews and Judaism have responded
- Basic understanding of Biblical Hebrew, equivalent to one year of college-level Hebrew
- Familiarity with primary resources and methodologies involved in Jewish Studies
- Development of intermediate to advanced knowledge and skills in an area of individual focus selected by the student
- Awareness of Jewish diversity throughout the ages

**MAJS Course Requirements** (48 quarter-hour credits)

- Introduction to Jewish Studies Course (1 course, 3 credits)
- Biblical Hebrew Language (3 courses, 3 credits each)
- Core Courses (9 courses, 3 credits each)
- Courses in Directed Reading or student’s specific Concentration Area (3 courses, 3 credits each)

**MAJS Course Titles**

- Introduction to Jewish Studies (Supervised Independent Study)
- Introductory Biblical Hebrew I, II, III (3 courses)
- The Bible and the Ancient Near East
- The World of the Rabbis
- Medieval Jewish Experiences
- Early Modern Jewish Experiences
- Modern Jewish Experiences
- Contemporary Jewish Experiences

**Level Two Core Courses:**

- Themes Across the Periods (3 courses)
- Directed Reading/Concentration Courses I, II, III (3 courses)
Doctor of Science in Jewish Studies

The Doctor of Science in Jewish Studies (DSJS) program is designed for Jewish professionals—including educators, administrators, and communal service workers—as well as lifelong learners in any field seeking increased understanding of the Jewish experience and academic grounding in Jewish thought and practice. The program allows students to address challenging, critical issues in Jewish life and thought and their relevance to individuals and the community. Applicants must have a master’s degree in Jewish Studies (or equivalent) and the equivalent of at least two years of college-level Hebrew language to be considered for admission.

DSJS Sought Learning Outcomes

- Describe how key issues have been addressed throughout classical Jewish history and literature
- Discuss how Jews have re-interpreted historical experience and texts to deal with perplexing issues
- Explain how and why authenticity and continuity have been maintained despite historical disruption and discontinuity
- Draw upon the resources of past Jewish literature and historical experience to address issues and problems challenging contemporary Jewish life
- Clarify students’ own intellectual and religious identities

DSJS Course Requirements (54 quarter-hour credits)

- Core Courses (7 courses, 3 credits each)
- Text Courses (5 courses, 3 credits each)
- Elective Courses (4 courses, 3 credits each)
- Courses Related to the Final Project (2 courses, 3 credits each)
- Comprehensive Examinations: The purpose of the required written Comprehensive Examinations is to assess the students’ competencies in Jewish Studies. Comprehensive Examinations are required in each of the following areas:
  1. Biblical Israel
  2. The Talmudic Era
  3. Medieval Jewry
  4. Jewish Modernity

DSJS Core Course Titles

- Who is a Jew?
- What is Judaism?
- Jewish Thinking
- Jewish Living
- Intergroup Relations
- Jewish Historiography
- Nature and Methodologies of Jewish Studies
Doctor of Hebrew Letters

The Doctor of Hebrew Letters (DHL) is designed specifically for in-service Jewish professionals, primarily rabbis, but also educators and communal service workers with extremely high facility with classical Hebrew texts. It serves those seeking career enhancement, career change, and personal edification. Unlike traditional degree programs, each student in the program undertakes an individuated process of learning. The program demands academic excellence balanced with skill-based knowledge directly applicable to those who desire to make a significant contribution to Jewish life. Applicants must have a master’s degree in Jewish Studies (or equivalent) and significant facility with classical Hebrew texts to be considered for admission.

DHL Sought Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate skills in a variety of methodologies and approaches by conceptualizing and critically analyzing key ideas, practices, and issues
- Demonstrate skills in studying classical and modern Jewish religious literature, including Talmud, Midrash, Biblical and Talmudic commentaries, codes, and responsa, Kabbalistic and Hasidic works, medieval Jewish ethical literature and pietica, and liturgies
- Trace historically, conceptually, and analytically a variety of issues, ideas, and practices through the labyrinth of classical Jewish religious literature
- Draw upon the resources of Jewish literature and historical experience to address issues and problems challenging contemporary Jewish life

DHL Course Requirements (54 quarter-hour credits)

- Reading Courses (7 courses, 3 credits each)
- Independent Text Based Courses (7 courses, 3 credits each)
- Research and Writing related to the Project Demonstrating Excellence (4 courses, 3 credits each)

Project Demonstrating Excellence (PDE) is not a traditional thesis but an applied, practical project grounded in traditional Jewish sources and intended to address current, setting-based issues. It is unique for each participant in the program, and is primarily completed offsite under faculty advisement.

DHL Reading Course Titles

- Jewish Theology
- Jewish Ethics
- Jewish Law (Halakhah)
- Key Issues in Contemporary Jewry
- Jewish Community and Organizational Development
- Elective Core Reading Course (for example, Spirituality, Mysticism, Prayer, Great Books)
- Additional work specifically related to the PDE
Faculty

Rabbi Scott Aaron
PhD, Loyola University of Chicago

Leonard Greenspoon
PhD, Harvard University

Gary Porton
PhD, Brown University

Dean P. Bell
PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Rabbi Peter J. Haas
PhD, Brown University

Russ Rogers
PhD, Michigan State University

Edward Breuer
PhD, Harvard University

Julie Harris
PhD, University of Pittsburgh

Joshua Shanes
PhD, University of Wisconsin

Barry Chazan
EdD, Columbia University, New York

Rachel Havrelock
PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Claire Sufrin
PhD, Stanford University

Keren Fraiman
PhD, Massachussets Institute of Technology

Rabbi Vernon Kurtz
DMin, Chicago Theological Seminary

Marc Swatez
PhD, Northwestern University

Igal German
PhD, University of Toronto

Elliot Lefkovitz
PhD, University of Michigan

Stephan Teodosic
MBA, Thunderbird School of Global Management

Ellen LeVee
PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Gary Weinstein
Masters in Higher Education, University of Houston

Hal M. Lewis
DJS, Spertus Institute

Rabbi Victor A. Mirelman PhD,
Columbia University

Tim O’Brien
PhD, Union Institute and University

Spertus

Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership
610 South Michigan Avenue | Chicago | 60605
312.322.1700 | spertus.edu

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