



Stuart and Suzanne Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience



Tulane University

Bold, Ambitious, and Exciting: The Stuart and Suzanne Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience

Our vision for Tulane's Department of Jewish Studies will build upon the strengths of the university and create a world-class hub of Jewish learning.

Tulane Jewish Studies is already nationally recognized, standing well above our peers in several key metrics. But we are striving for even greater heights. The cornerstone of our strategy to move to an elite level is the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience, through which we will become the academic leader for the innovative and holistic study of American Jewry. Creating new intellectual connections, the Grant Center will transform the field by practicing across disciplinary and subfield boundaries, emphasizing the global orientation of the American Jewish experience.



But only at Tulane can we move beyond this broad reconceptualization and become the undisputed leader in the study of Southern Jewish history by leveraging New Orleans' position as a gateway to the region and the world. Only at Tulane can we partner with our internationally acclaimed Stone Center to redefine the fields of Latin American and Caribbean Jewish Studies. Only at Tulane can we reimagine American Jewish continuity in the twenty-first century by harnessing Tulane Hillel's laboratory of approaches to American Jewish life. And only at Tulane can we explore the ways in which women as historical actors have shaped American Jewish life, and how the Bible, literature, arts, and culture have evolved as key markers of Jewish distinctiveness.

We will build a world-class faculty and implement a dynamic and innovative slate of programming, pioneering new areas of inquiry in the study of American Jewry. Taken together, this will position Tulane as a hub of excellence and the global leader in the study of the American Jewish experience.

Michael R. Cohen
Chair, Department of Jewish Studies

This is bold, ambitious, and exciting. Were Tulane to raise the money for these positions, you would reshape the field and become the undisputed leader for training students in American Jewish Studies.

— Pamela S. Nadell, immediate past president, Association for Jewish Studies; professor and director, Jewish Studies Program, American University; author of *American Jewish Women: A History from the Colonial Times to Today* (2019); Patrick Clendenen Chair in Women's & Gender History

Who We Are

Tulane Jewish Studies began in the 1970s, offering a limited number of courses in Hebrew language and American Jewish literature. As the Soviet Jewry movement gained traction around the nation, Jewish Studies gained a more prominent place on campus, and its growth continued into the 1990s. The program was transformed in 2003 by a major gift from the Sizeler family, and in the ensuing decade, Tulane received significant gifts from generous donors and national foundations. We now feature some of the strongest enrollments in the nation, and in 2019, a major gift from Stuart and Suzanne Grant created the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience.

Here at Tulane, we are positioned to achieve even greater heights. We are already home to a strong community of Jewish fraternities and sororities, a thriving Hillel, and a popular Chabad Student Center. Within this conducive environment, Tulane's Department of Jewish Studies has prided itself on the fact that our classes have high attendance among both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Our impact reaches well beyond campus, as we provide our students with a critical liberal arts education foundation, including the tools to be leaders in medicine, law, technology, business and other competitive fields.

Campaign Goals

- Build a world-class faculty by appointing new faculty members to the department
- Implement a dynamic slate of public programs, innovative student engagement activities, and cutting-edge research opportunities

1 IN 4

THE NUMBER OF 2018 GRADUATES THAT ENROLLED IN A JEWISH STUDIES COURSE WHILE AT TULANE

750 STUDENTS

ENROLLED IN JEWISH STUDIES AND HEBREW COURSES IN THE 2017-18 ACADEMIC YEAR, many of whom studied abroad in Israel and elsewhere

OUR ALUMNI

“People are the submarine fleet’s greatest asset. My degree gave me the tools necessary to engage, mentor and learn from a diverse group of sailors. Studying Jewish history made me a better leader, and it helped me to analyze macro trends and apply lessons learned from the past.”

TRAVIS BEAN ’09

US Navy, Navigator, Attack Submarine

“The corporate world today is about globalization, and my Jewish Studies degree gave me the tools I needed to be successful in a multicultural, multilingual and challenging environment.”

JESSICA BODKER ’09

Sr. Product Manager, Genentech

“My Jewish Studies degree cultivated a true love of Jewish education and gave me an invaluable foundation for my later studies in rabbinical school.”

ALEXIS PINSKY ’10

Rabbi

“My Jewish Studies degree provided a perfect balance to my public health minor and my pre-med track, and it made me a unique candidate for my MPH program at Johns Hopkins.”

ARIELLE GORSTEIN ’11

Senior Program Associate, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

“I credit my Jewish Studies classes for improving my research skills and preparing me for life as a journalist. I have covered topics such as Bubby, a Jewish dating app, and I have written for *The Forward* newspaper.”

MARGARET ABRAMS ’12

Lifestyle Writer, New York Observer



What We Do

Representing an interdisciplinary approach to thinking and learning, the field of Jewish Studies explores the evolution of Judaism, Jewish culture and Jewish nationalism from biblical times to the present. Through the specific study of the Jewish people from multiple perspectives, we offer insight into the universality of the human experience. We provide tools for individuals, Jewish and non-Jewish, to ground contemporary issues within their historical contexts. We emphasize communication, inquiry, critical thinking and writing, equipping our graduates with the skills to be competitive and successful in myriad careers.

Tulane is poised to be a leader
in our understanding of the
essential role Jews have played in
American culture and society.

– Brian Edwards, dean of School of Liberal Arts

Building the Foundation for a World-Class Faculty

STUART AND SUZANNE GRANT CHAIR IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE

This professorship will be awarded to a senior scholar in the field, someone whose research and writing has national stature and helps students, scholars, and the general public understand better the richness and variety of the American Jewish experience. Hired out of a national search, academic discipline and area of specialization within the American Jewish experience will be open. This endowed professorship will build the foundation of the Grant Center.

ENDOWED CHAIR IN AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

For Tulane to be a national leader in American Jewish Studies with a mandate to shape the field, we must create one of the most prestigious and influential American Jewish history endowed chairs in the nation. This position could also be the first and only endowed chair in Southern Jewish history—positioning Tulane as the undisputed pioneer in this emerging area. This endowment will build a marquee position, announcing our national presence and our intention to break new ground in this field. In so doing it will become the anchor position for the department, a lynchpin that connects the study of contemporary Jewry to its historical roots, and a defining position for Tulane University.

FACULTY POSITION IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN JEWRY

Tulane's current strength in American Jewish history, coupled with our Hillel's innovative laboratory of contemporary Jewish life, will make this position the most impactful of its kind in the nation. This professor would serve as the bridge linking the academic study of the past to an understanding of the present. In so doing, he or she will provide a direct link to the internationally-acclaimed work of Tulane Hillel and its award-winning Tulane Jewish Leaders program, making this position exponentially more powerful because of its location at Tulane.

FACULTY POSITION IN HEBREW BIBLE

This instructor will teach courses and conduct research on the Hebrew Bible, the most widely-read and consequential book in human history. This professor will play an essential role in building the foundations of the Grant Center, connecting the ancient past to the present.

"The communication- and discussion-based classes, which focused on history, writing and analysis, have helped me get to where I am today."

NOAH DAVIS '14

*Senior Partnerships Manager,
Yelp, Inc.*

"My Jewish Studies minor has come up time and time again when interviewing for various roles. The critical thinking, analytic, writing and presentation skills that I learned in JWST have guided my career."

MATT DEITCH '12

Silverpeak Strategic Partners

"My emphasis on Holocaust studies provided a lens into the importance of the rule of law, critical to my practice as a lawyer and my time at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, as well as the compassion necessary to incite my strong pro bono practice."

KAYLA GREEN '12

Associate Attorney, King & Spalding, LLP

"Majoring in Jewish Studies at Tulane University made me a better writer. This translated into a successful \$50,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to support my medical-device startup venture."

MITCHELL GREENBERG '12

President and CEO, Saber

"The most challenging and rewarding discussions I have ever had were in JWST classes. Immersion in Jewish culture set me on my life's course, bringing me to Israel, where I found myself working for Tel Aviv tech startups."

RONNIE KANTER '12

Peer5, Director of Sales

Implementing Dynamic Research, Programming, and Student Enrichment:

Programmatic funding for the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience will launch the center as a major player in the field of American Jewish history, boldly positioning Tulane as the national leader.

- **Lectures, seminars, films, and exhibits** will be led by the world's leading scholars, practitioners and Jewish communal leaders.
- **Conferences**, creating new intellectual connections, will transform the field by practicing across disciplinary and subfield boundaries, emphasizing both the domestic particularity and global orientation of the American Jewish experience.
- **Faculty research support** will facilitate our faculty's scholarly growth and increase international visibility.
- **Student-faculty research opportunities** will provide students with the tools to excel outside the classroom, exploring scholarship firsthand.
- **Service learning** is the very essence of Tulane's curriculum, and the center will integrate Tulane's



Leveraging Tulane's Strengths

FACULTY POSITIONS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN JEWISH STUDIES

By drawing from the resources of both the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience and Tulane's world-renowned Stone Center for Latin American Studies, this scholar will help to position Tulane as the clear leader in the emergent fields of Latin American and Caribbean Jewish Studies. These professors will expand our understandings of Jewish life in the Americas and the Caribbean, conducting work in various disciplines such as history, sociology, political science, history, anthropology or the arts.

FACULTY POSITION IN JEWISH LITERATURE

This position will focus on literature, one of the central components of American Jewish culture. With globalization, secularization, and chronological distance from the Holocaust, Hebrew literature is now one of the most vibrant components of Jewish identity in America, serving as a center of cultural exchange and circulation between Israeli and American culture. The position will also explore American Jewish literature written in English, emphasizing such themes as anti-Semitism, race, Southern Jewry, the Holocaust, historical memory, acculturation, and religious life.

Pioneering New Directions

FACULTY POSITION IN AMERICAN JEWISH WOMEN, GENDER, AND/OR SEXUALITY STUDIES

This position will build upon Tulane's strengths, emphasizing the centrality of women, gender, and sexuality in the American Jewish experience. This professor will explore how American Jews have navigated norms of gender and sexuality that are sometimes complimentary and sometimes conflicting—traditional Jewish norms of marital purity, endogamy, and gendered patterns of occupation and religious participation have all been transformed in America. This professor will also explore gendered and sexualized understandings of Jewish difference, as well as the role of Jewish actors in broader debates and movements around the politics of gender and sexuality. America's Jewish women have a history distinct from that of other American women and from that of American Jewish men, and this professor will situate women as historical actors within the American Jewish experience.

FACULTY POSITION IN AMERICAN JEWISH MUSIC, ARTS AND/OR CULTURE

This position will build upon Tulane's strengths in the arts, providing new approaches to the study of American Jewish life. This professor will bring the work of innovative artists to the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience, exploring the relationships between the arts and Jewish identity. This professor's work may be in visual arts, film, music, theater & dance, or a related field.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES

The unique strengths of the Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience will make this position the top postdoctoral fellowship in the nation for emerging scholars of the American Jewish experience. This scholar will push the center to move in new directions, innovating in the field while providing new opportunities for student coursework and faculty research collaboration. This two-year position would be non-renewable, ensuring fresh new perspectives and cutting-edge scholarship.

robust commitment to improving our overall community into our enrichment opportunities.

- **Internships and career seminars** will allow our students to gain valuable experience outside the classroom, enriching their Tulane experience.
- **Scholarly working groups** will explore diverse and multidisciplinary themes/subjects. Each cohort will, over a two-year period, examine a specific topic or question through various historical, disciplinary, and contextual mediums and lenses.
- **Visiting scholar support** will bring international scholars to campus to engage with the stunning array of Jewish Studies documents available in Tulane University's Special Collections archive.
- **Southern Jewish history** will be a particular focus of our programming, capitalizing on our partnerships.
- **Graduate student fellowships** will train the next generation of scholars in the American Jewish Experience.



Tulane University

DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES

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