**Annual Departmental Assessment Report**

**Department or Program: JDST**

**Academic Year of Report: 2021**

**Department Contact Person for Assessment: Gina Herrmann, Interim Director**

**Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

The curriculum and minor have been redesigned to improve the quality of the program. Students will have a contemporary language to study in the program (yet have access to biblical Hebrew via Professor Green and Rabbi Goldstein). There will also be one or two new courses for the next AY including Jewish Literature and Art, and Jewish Image and Media. Rabbi Goldstein and Gurley continued to work with WISCR on a public speaking and social justice course. JDST has submitted an IHP proposal for the next AY in order to increase our curriculum offerings in the Holocaust and hire a named Professor of Holocaust Studies.

We held a curriculum development grant award cycle and four faculty received funding to develop courses that will be spaced out over a 4-year period, ideally:

Heidi Kaufman
Jeffrey Librett
Rick Colby
Mark Quigley

These faculty will be offering new classes, with the JDST heading, on the topics of graphic novels, shtetel, ghetto, and Holocaust cinema.

The aim of the new curriculum grants was to respond to student discussions about there being more vibrant JDST courses on the books as well as having a larger selection of university faculty teaching in the program. (The most common complaint from students has been that there are not enough JDST specific courses and that the same faculty always teach for the program.) The concept is to have 3-4 new upper division courses that could be taught over a four-year period. This will introduce more students to both JDST courses and a variety of faculty, as well as help generate sustained interest in the minor/major. Since Meir Goldstein has taken up a lion’s share of the core courses, Karen and Gantt had discussed how these grants would also give participating and interested faculty a chance to be more involved in the program by teaching courses aligned with their research interests. JDST 351, 352, and 353 were designed with all this in mind and to be flexible across disciplines and research profiles. This explains their thematic and broad reaching nature. We plan to assess how well this initiative works by tracking enrollments and by a post-course survey that will ask students about how these courses have functioned in their educational trajectories.

As has been suggested, these courses should be spaced out over a 4-year period and scheduled taking into consideration the core courses as well as the participating faculty’s teaching load and home department schedules. Because JDST has experienced diminished enrollments in upper division courses, our utmost attention to the scheduling and advertising is paramount to their success. There are four core courses that are taught regularly every year now that Meir Goldstein is here.

JDST 212 in the Fall

JDST 410 in the Winter

JDST 330 and JDST 213 in the Spring

Over the next two years we aim to offer a schedule as follows:

Fall 2021: JDST 212, JDST 352

Winter 2022: JDST 410, JDST 353

Spring 2022: JDST 213, JDST 330

Fall 2022: JDST 212, JDST 351

Winter 2023: JDST 410, JDST 353

Spring 2023: JDST 213, JDST 330

This should serve as a guide for how the course grants were intended to be implemented. Our hope is that spreading these courses out will maximize our chances of getting students into our classes and in turn we will provide to the student body at large a robust curriculum that is attractive and dynamic to those who are contemplating a JDST minor/major.

**Plans for Next Year**

As interim director, I have followed the guidelines set forth by Gantt, and have overseen further programmatic changes only with regard to the new JDST courses described above. With Covid, we are in a holding pattern. Rabbi Goldstein continues to attract students and acclaim for his teaching. He will be teaching a third course in 2021-22. He has proven to be an involved support/advisor for the program. His teaching and service have been invaluable to JDST. We have many more social and academic goals for the post-Pandemic period ahead and we hope that next year we will be able to create momentum in the program as we redefine ourselves as a community-based academic community. We plan to send out a questionnaire to majors/minors next fall (2021) asking what other suggestions they might have concerning the revitalization of the program.

 We hope to be able to hire a new modern Hebrew instructor for AY22-23.