The tenure-line faculty of the Program in Jewish Studies has voted to recommend the elimination of the minor's 6-hour language requirement, and reallocation of the 6 hours to the minor's elective requirement.

The formal vote was conducted via email on 5 September 2012, with non-respondents re-polled on 18 March 2013. Two (2) faculty members did not respond to either the September or March emails, and thus did not cast ballots.

The tally among the faculty participating in the vote was 10 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

In an email dated December 4, 2012, CEP Chair Calvin Miller requested an elaboration of the rationale for the proposed elimination the language requirement for the Jewish Studies minor.

This memo provides that expanded rationale, including a comparison with the language requirements for minors in other area studies programs.

**RATIONALE**

Faculty are in agreement that Hebrew language instruction (or instruction in another Jewish language such as Yiddish) is central to the *major* in Jewish Studies.

The Jewish Studies program also currently requires its *minors* to complete the equivalent of one year of Elementary Hebrew, either biblical or modern.

Faculty concur that a *minor* in Jewish Studies need not impose a language requirement. The reasons for this are as follows:

1) JS is an area studies program, not a foreign language study program.

2) There are vast areas of Jewish civilizational experience across the continents and millennia that are not tied to the Hebrew language. Jewish cultural forms are characterized by enormous linguistic diversity.

3) The language requirement occupies fully 1/3 of the minor’s credit hours (6 of 18). This limits the minors’ breadth of exposure to the broader field of Jewish Studies. Eliminating the language requirement and reallocating those 6 hours
to electives would enable students to broaden their coursework in Jewish studies.

4) Elimination of the language requirement would not preclude students from taking the language courses in fulfillment of the electives counting toward the minor.

5) The language requirement has been identified by students interested in the minor as the primary reason they do not declare a minor. Many students who could be eligible to declare a Jewish Studies minor begin enrolling in JS courses after having already fulfilled their AXLE language requirement. A second language requirement serves as a significant deterrent. We anticipate substantial growth in the number of JS minors with the elimination of the language requirement.

There is not a consistent practice or policy regarding language requirements for Area Studies minors in the College of Arts and Science.

1) Programs housed in language departments such as French & Italian, Spanish & Portuguese, German & Slavic have language requirements for the minors.

2) The more appropriate comparison group for the Jewish Studies program are area studies programs that are not housed in language departments. Across these programs, there is no consistent set of language requirements. Asian Studies and Latin American Studies have language requirement for their minors. European Studies and African American and Diaspora Studies do not have a language requirement for their minors. The Classical Civilizations minor does not have a language requirement. (This is by design. The Classical Civilizations program of concentration was created to add a non-language-requiring degree option alongside the Classics and Classical Languages concentrations.)

We believe that the revision to JS minor’s language requirement to align it with the policies in European Studies and African American and Diaspora Studies is appropriate and justified in light of all the foregoing considerations.
Program of Concentration in Jewish Studies

The major in Jewish Studies requires a minimum of 30 credit hours.

1. Foundational course, 3 credit hours. JS 180 or JS 180W, Introduction to Jewish Studies.

2. Language, 6 credit hours. A year of modern Hebrew (Hebrew 113a–113b, Intermediate Hebrew) or biblical Hebrew (REL 3814, Intermediate Hebrew).* Proficiency at the level of intermediate Hebrew can be demonstrated through testing. If this option is exercised, students will take an additional 6 credit hours of electives toward the major.

*In place of biblical or modern Hebrew, interested students may substitute one of the following languages of the Jewish people: Rabbinic Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, Ladino, or Judaeo-Arabic. For languages not presently taught at Vanderbilt, proficiency at the intermediate level may be demonstrated through an exam administered by a designated member of the Jewish Studies faculty. If this option is exercised, students will take an additional 6 credit hours of electives toward the major.

3. Focus courses, 12 credit hours selected from three of four subfields of study:
   - Area 1: Biblical Studies
   - Area 2: Antiquity and the Medieval World
   - Area 3: Modern and Contemporary Experience
   - Area 4: Culture, Philosophy, and Literature

4. Senior capstone course, 3 credit hours. JS 295, Senior Seminar, or JS 296, Senior Project in Jewish Studies. Senior Project proposal must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies.

5. Electives (minimum of 6 credit hours)—Any of the courses listed below that is not used to fulfill a requirement towards the major may be counted as an elective with the exception of JS 288a, which cannot count toward the major because it must be taken Pass/Fail. In addition to courses drawn from Arts and Science departments and the professional schools, nontraditional course work may also be selected, including archaeology at Tel Megiddo (Israel), service learning, and internships. Study abroad is encouraged and can be fulfilled with Jewish Studies in Prague and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Honors Program

The Honors Program in Jewish Studies affords superior students a more intensive concentration within their major field.
To be admitted, students must have:

1. 3.0 cumulative grade point average
2. 3.25 grade point average in Jewish Studies
3. Completion of the junior year

Requirements for graduation with Honors in Jewish Studies are:

1. 6 credit hours in Honors sections (JS 298a–298b), including completion of thesis—these credit hours may count as elective credit toward the major. Honors thesis to be completed by mid-spring of the senior year.
2. Successful completion of an honors oral examination on the topic of the thesis.

Minor in Jewish Studies

The minor in Jewish Studies provides a basic understanding of Jewish history and culture across continents and the past three millennia. The minor requires a minimum of 18 credit hours.

1. Foundational course, 3 credit hours. JS 180 or 180W, Introduction to Jewish Studies.

2. Language, 6 hours. A year of modern Hebrew (Hebrew 111a–111b, Elementary Hebrew) or elementary biblical Hebrew (REL 2500–2501, Elementary Biblical Hebrew). Proficiency at the level of elementary Hebrew may be demonstrated through testing. If this option is exercised, students will take an additional 6 hours of electives toward the minor. For more language options, see major.

3. Focus courses, 6 credit hours. (See major for categories.)

4. Electives (minimum of 3 9 credit hours)
Any of the courses listed below that is not used to fulfill a requirement toward the minor may be counted as an elective. Special Topics courses or First-Year Writing Seminar courses dealing with topics related to Jewish Studies may be counted with the approval of the program director.
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The major in Jewish Studies requires a minimum of 30 credit hours.

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2. Language, 6 credit hours. A year of modern Hebrew (Hebrew 113a–113b, Intermediate Hebrew) or biblical Hebrew (REL 3814, Intermediate Hebrew).* Proficiency at the level of intermediate Hebrew can be demonstrated through testing.

   If this option is exercised, students will take an additional 6 credit hours of electives toward the major.

   *In place of biblical or modern Hebrew, interested students may substitute one of the following languages of the Jewish people: Rabbinic Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, Ladino, or Judaeo-Arabic. For languages not presently taught at Vanderbilt, proficiency at the intermediate level may be demonstrated through an exam administered by a designated member of the Jewish Studies faculty. If this option is exercised, students will take an additional 6 credit hours of electives toward the major.

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1. Foundational course, 3 credit hours. JS 180 or 180W, Introduction to Jewish Studies.

2. Focus courses, 6 credit hours. (See major for categories.)

3. Electives (minimum of 9 credit hours)
   Any of the courses listed below that is not used to fulfill a requirement toward the minor may be counted as an elective. Special Topics courses or First-Year Writing Seminar courses dealing with topics related to Jewish Studies may be counted with the approval of the program director.


AREA 4. CULTURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND LITERATURE: Jewish Studies: 115F-02, Music and Identity in Jewish Traditions; 115F-04, Civil Rights and Civil Wrongs: Black–Jewish Relations in the 1950s and 1960s; 115F-05, Gender, Sexuality, and Desire in Jewish Literature; 115F-06, Reading across the Boundaries: Arab and Israeli Literature and Culture; 115F-08, Berlin: Cabaret, Communism, Creativity; 115F-10, Jewish Response to Catastrophe; 135W,