The Judaism Exam is designed to give the student a basic understanding of a wide range of texts and historical events from the Hellenistic period to rabbinic literature. The exam will also provide more specialized knowledge of a few topics determined by the student and his/her advisor. The exam consists of two main components—a general bibliography and a special topics bibliography. The general bibliography includes both primary sources and secondary literature.

1. Special Topics

The student will choose a special topic in consultation with his/her advisor. It can be a theme, historical period or text. This will be an opportunity to explore potential dissertation topics. You will develop a bibliography of 8-10 books and articles on your special topic (the total amount of reading should be, at a minimum, approximately the total of 4 medium length books). The bibliography must be approved, and may be modified by, the student’s advisor. The student MUST choose a special topic at the beginning of his/her preparation for this exam.

2. General Bibliography

Organizing Themes: The student is required to be familiar with and formulate opinions about a large amount of primary and secondary material. To assist in this endeavor, the student, in consultation with his/her advisor, will decide upon two broad themes that are prominent in the material covered in the general bibliography. The student, when reading, will give particular attention to these themes. Some examples of themes include: apocalypticism, sectarianism, halakhah, biblical interpretation, angels, life after death, and the Temple. In consultation with his/her advisor, the student may slightly modify the general bibliography in light of these organizing themes selected. For example, if the student chooses “resurrection” as a theme, his/her advisor could replace, from the Dead Sea Scrolls section, the Habakkuk Pesher with 4Q521 or 4Q385 and, from the Secondary Sources section, substitute the reading from Kugel’s In Potiphar’s House with George Nickelsburg, Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity (Harvard, 2006).

2a. Primary Sources

The student is expected to have a basic knowledge of all the literature listed in this section. The student should learn the general content and main themes of each text, and its date and provenance. In the oral component of the exam the faculty may ask general questions regarding a few items from this list, and you will show that you have some basic (if brief) knowledge of the text. It is expected that you, when reading each selection, read several articles about it in general surveys (e.g., Nickelsburg, Barclay) and encyclopedias (such as ABD or the Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls).

2a1. Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical Literature

- 1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees
- The Wisdom of Solomon
2/Judaism Exam

- Ben Sira
- 4 Ezra

2a2. Pseudepigrapha

- 2 Baruch
- 1 Enoch
- Joseph and Aseneth
- Jubilees
- Letter of Aristeas
- Sibylline Oracles (3 and 5)
- Testament of Moses
- Testament of the 12 Patriarchs (read only T. Joseph and T. Levi)

2a3. Other Diaspora Literature

- Philo, On the Creation of the World and Life of Moses (can be replaced by other writings of Philo, with advisor’s permission)
- Josephus, Antiquities 1-2, 18-20; Jewish War 2, 5-7 (can be replaced by other texts of Josephus, with advisor’s permission)

2a4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

- The Community Rule (1QS)
- The Damascus Document (CD)
- Habakkuk Pesher (1QpHab)
- The Hodayot
- 4QMMT
- Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (4Q400-407)
- The War Scroll (1QM)

2a5. Rabbinic Literature

Mishnah (Danby). Read the following tractates:

- Berakhot
- Avot
- Kiddushin

Babylonian Talmud.

- Berakhot 2a-3a. Read Robert Goldenberg, “Talmud,” in Holtz, Back to the Sources [see General Bibliography], pp. 129-75.


Midrash.


2b. Secondary Sources

The student is expected to know the main themes and theses of the following books. It is strongly recommended that you look at book reviews to see how they contribute to scholarship. In terms of the surveys of texts and historical periods in this list (e.g., Grabbe, Nickelsburg) you need to have a basic understanding of the material they cover.