

## **The 2008 Association for Jewish Studies Membership Survey**

Courtesy of The Jewish Policy Archive, with the support of the Charles H. Revson Foundation and the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation

Prof. Steven M. Cohen  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, [steve34nyc@aol.com](mailto:steve34nyc@aol.com)  
and  
Dr. Judith Veinstein, Jewish Policy Archive, [jveinstein@gmail.com](mailto:jveinstein@gmail.com)

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With 1700 members, the Association for Jewish Studies encompasses a demographically, professionally and intellectually diverse group. Founded in 1969 and approaching the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first scholarly conference, the Association sought a systematic survey to comprehend the diversity of its large and growing membership. To address this need, on behalf of the Association of Jewish Studies, the Jewish Policy Archive conducted a web-based survey of AJS members in the winter of 2007-08.

Designed in conjunction with AJS officers and professional leadership, the survey sought to obtain a profile of the entire AJS membership, including information on:

- demographic characteristics,
- professional and academic employment and interests, and
- views of the Association.

Of the 1500 AJS members with e-mail addresses on file who were invited to participate, 488 (or about one-third) responded. Below are selected highlights of the results, offered without comment or analysis.

By way of background, the AJS questions were subsumed within a larger survey designed to inform the planning of the Jewish Policy Archive, a forthcoming on-line collection of social scientific and other documents related to the study of Jewish communal policy in North America.

This study was funded by the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation and by the Charles H. Revson Foundation, and performed free of charge to the Association for Jewish Studies. In turn, the Jewish Policy Archive thanks the Association for facilitating access to the AJS membership for purposes of the larger study conducted by JPA.

## Demographics

**Gender balance:** Respondents are about equally divided between men and women (53% and 47%, respectively).

**Median age of 50** Just over 70% of respondents are between the ages of 35-64. Those under age 35 comprise 17% and those 65 or older comprise 12%.

Current Age	Percentage
Under 35	17.3
35-49	32.0
50-64	38.8
65+	12.0
Total	100.0

**A Wired Community** 78% of respondents go online several times a day at home and at the office; 14% go online only once a day at home, and 6.0 % go online only once a day at work. 52% report that they check their email continually throughout the day, with 5% reporting that they check their email only once a day.

**Doctorates and more:** As can be seen in the table below, 75% of respondents hold a Ph.D., 10% hold an MA and 7% hold a Rabbinical degree. [Note: Respondents were limited to a single choice, such that some who report holding a Ph.D. may also hold a rabbinical degree, and vice versa.]

Highest Degree Earned	Percentage
BA or other college degree	2.1
MA	9.9
Law degree	.2
MSW	.2
M.L.S.	.4
Other Master's	2.1
M.D.	.2
Ed.D.	1.0
Ph.D.	74.7
Rabbinical degree	6.8
Other degree	2.5
Total	100.0

**Year of Ph.D.:** Of those holding a Ph.D., 36% received their degree since the year 2000, and most received their degree by 1990 or thereafter.

Year Ph.D. Received	Percentage
1950-1959	1.1
1960-1969	2.8
1970-1979	21.0
1980-1989	18.5
1990-1999	20.5
2000-2008	36.1
Total	100.0

**American-based:** More than three quarters (76%) of the respondents reside in the U.S.; 9% live in Canada, and 8% live in Israel.

Country of Residence	Percentage
U.S	76.3
Canada	9.1
Israel	8.4
Other	6.2
Total	100.0

**Politically liberal:** Consistent with the political profile of Jews generally, respondents overwhelmingly are situated on the left of the political spectrum. Of the U.S. citizens, 79% identify themselves as Democrats and 65% would call themselves liberal, substantially exceeding these proportions in the American Jewish population.

Political Affiliation	Percentage
Democrat	78.6
Independent	15.7
Republican	5.6
Total	100.0

Political Orientation	Percentage
Liberal	64.6
Moderate	26.0
Conservative	9.4
Total	100.0

**Frequent Travel to Israel:** 31% responded that they had been to Israel at least once in 2007, with one-third reporting that they were last in Israel between 2004-2006.

Last in Israel	Percentage
2007	64.6
2004-2006	26.0
2000-2003	9.4
1990-1999	14.6
Before 1990	7.2
Never	5.4

**Religious Affiliation:** Almost the entire sample (92%) identified as Jewish. Close to 3% of respondents identified as Christian, and 5% as having no religious affiliation.

Religion	Percentage
Jewish	92.0
Protestant	1.5
Catholic	1.3
Other religion	.2
None	5.0
Total	100.0

**Conservative and Orthodox most frequent:** Of the Jews, 21% identify with the Orthodox movement, 33% with the Conservative movement, and 14% with the Reform movement. Eighteen percent of the sample identified themselves as non-denominational.

Denomination	Percentage
Orthodox	21.3
Conservative	32.5
Reform	13.5
Reconstructionist	3.9
Renewal	.9
Jewish: multi-denominational	9.5
Jewish: non-denominational	18.3
Total	100.0

## Professional Characteristics

**Most are professors:** Two thirds of respondents are university faculty. Of all respondents, 21% are full professors, 18% are assistant professors, and 16% are associate professors.

Current Profession	Percentage
Full Professor	20.7
Assistant Professor	18.1
Associate Professor	15.8
Lecturer	11.5
Student	11.1
Endowed Chair	9.4
Researcher	3.5
K-12 Teacher	1.9
Independent Scholar	1.6
Librarian	.9
Emeritus	.2
Archivist	.2
Other	4.9
Total	100.0

**Working full-time:** The vast majority (84%) are employed full time.

Employment Status	Percentage
Full-time	84.1
Part-time	8.7
Adjunct	5.6
Not applicable	1.6
Total	100.0

**Universities:** The vast majority (83%) work at a college, university, seminary or other institution of higher education. Just over half (51%) of those who work in institutions of higher education work for public ones.

Status of Institutions of Higher Education	Percentage
Public	51.2
Private	30.7
Sectarian – Jewish	14.6
Sectarian – Christian	2.8
Other	.8
Total	100.0

**Working in higher education:** 63% work in a graduate-degree granting institution or university.

Type of Institution of Higher Education	Percentage
A graduate-degree granting institution or university	63.2
A 4-year institution or college	20.3
A seminary	9.9
A research institute	3.8
A 2-year junior or community college	.8
Other	2.0
Total	100.0

**Most are tenured or tenurable:** Most respondents are tenured (43%) or on a tenure-track (17%).

Tenure Status	Percentage
Tenured	42.8
Non-tenured but on a tenure track	17.4
Not on a tenure track	15.8
Not applicable	24.0
Total	100.0

**Jewish Studies Undergraduate Offerings:** Three quarters of the respondents' institutions offer an undergraduate program in Jewish studies (76%) and even more, 86%, offer undergraduate courses in Jewish studies. More than half (58%) offer undergraduate majors in Jewish Studies, and 68% offer undergraduate minors in the same. Only 29% offer an undergraduate Jewish Studies certificate.

Undergraduate Offerings	Percentage Offered
Courses in Jewish Studies	85.6
Program in Jewish Studies	76.1
Minor in Jewish Studies	68.3
Major in Jewish Studies	57.5
Undergraduate Jewish Studies certificate	29.0

**Graduate Offerings:** With regard to graduate studies, just over half (51%) of respondents' institutions offer a graduate program in Jewish studies, but 66% offer graduate-level courses in Jewish studies. More than half (54%) offer an M.A. or other Master's degree, independently in Jewish studies or in cooperation with an affiliated department. Almost as many, or 47%, offer a Ph.D. independently in Jewish studies or in cooperation with an affiliated department.

Graduate Offerings	Percentage Offered
Courses in Jewish Studies	65.9
M.A. or other Master's degree, independently in Jewish Studies or in cooperation with another department	54.3
Program in Jewish Studies	50.9
Ph.D., independently in Jewish Studies or in cooperation with another department	46.5



**History, Religion, etc.:** Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents indicated that they work in the History department, followed by Religion (16%) and Near Eastern/Judaic Studies (11%).

Current Department	Percentage
History	23.6
Religion	16.4
Near Eastern/Judaic Studies	11.2
English Literature	5.7
Rabbinics/Talmud	5.2
Sociology	4.2
Bible	3.1
Hebrew Language and Literature	2.9
Education	2.6
Comparative Literature	2.3
Romance Languages	1.8
Philosophy	1.3
Other	19.7
Total	100.0

**Jewish Studies Programs and Departments:** Fully 43% of respondents have an appointment in a department or program outside of a Jewish studies program while 32% have an appointment in a Jewish Studies program or department as well as another department. A quarter of the respondents hold appointments exclusively in a Jewish Studies department or program.

Appointment In...	Percentage
A Jewish Studies department or program exclusively	24.8
A Jewish Studies department or program and another department or program	32.7
A department or program outside of a Jewish Studies program	42.5
Total	100.0

**Fields of Graduate Study:** Just over a quarter (28%) studied History at the graduate level. The most popular secondary area of graduate study was Near Eastern/Judaic Studies (18%).

Primary Area of Graduate Study	Percentage
History	27.5
Near Eastern/Judaic Studies	9.3
Rabbinics/Talmud	8.3
Religion	7.7
Sociology	4.8
Hebrew Language and Literature	4.8
Comparative Literature	4.3
English Literature	4.0
Bible	3.7
Education	2.1
Cultural Studies	1.9
Political Science	1.9
Anthropology	1.6
Philosophy	1.6
Romance Languages	1.1
Other	15.4
Total	100.0

Secondary Area of Graduate Study	Percentage
Near Eastern/Judaic Studies	17.6
History	10.9
Religion	6.2
Philosophy	5.9
Comparative Literature	5.9
Gender/Women's Studies	5.6
Rabbinics/Talmud	5.0
Bible	4.7
Sociology	4.4
American Studies	3.8
Cultural Studies	3.8
Hebrew Language and Literature	3.5
Political Science	1.8
Linguistics	1.5
Anthropology	1.5
Performance Studies	1.5
Music	1.2
Other	15.2
Total	100.0

**Wide range of specializations:** Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that Modern Jewish History in Europe/Asia/Israel and other communities represented their area of specialization.

Area of Specialization	Percentage
Modern Jewish History in Europe/Asia/ Israel and other Communities	12.5
Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History	9.1
Social Science, Anthropology and Folklore	9.4
Modern Jewish History in the Americas	8.9
Talmud, Midrash, and Rabbinics	8.6
Modern Jewish Thought and Theology	5.7
Bible	5.7
Holocaust Studies	4.7
Modern Jewish Literature	4.2
Jewish History in Late Antiquity	3.9
Israel Studies	3.1
Modern Hebrew Literature	2.9
Sephardi/Mizrahi Studies	2.9
Yiddish Literature	2.6
Jews and the Arts	2.1
Jewish Mysticism	1.3
Medieval Jewish Philosophy	1.0
Other	11.4
Total	100.0

**The road to tenure:** More than a third of respondents, 35%, were able to immediately find a full-time, tenure track academic position upon receipt of his/her Ph.D. and 11% are currently seeking a full-time academic position (not necessarily tenure-track).

Length of Time Needed to Find a Tenure-Track Academic Position after Receipt of Ph.D.	Percentage
Did not seek a full-time academic position	7.9
Already held such a position upon receiving Ph.D.	9.6
Immediately found such a position	34.5
1 year	9.3
2 years	7.9
3 years	2.8
4-6 years	7.9
7 or more years	3.4
Am still seeking a full-time, tenure-track academic position	11.0
Other	5.6
Total	100.0

**Alternatives to academia:** Seventy-three percent of respondents who are currently seeking a full-time academic position indicated that they would consider a career outside of academia. Outside of academia, 85% indicated that they would consider working in a think tank or research center.

Areas Outside of Academia that Respondents Would Consider	Percentage
Think Tank or Research Center	85.1
Publishing	51.1
Museum work	42.6
Non-Profit Sector	36.2
Higher Education Administration	31.9
Jewish Communal work	29.8
Foundation work	23.4
Business sector	14.9
Training for a different profession	14.9
Secondary education- public or independent school system	10.6
Secondary education- parochial school system	8.5
Primary education	6.4
Other	6.4

**Current salary:** Twenty-two percent of respondents earned \$100,000 or more, while 18% reported earning less than \$25,000. Median salary approximates \$65,000. Just 12% earn \$125,000 or more.

Current Salary	Percentage
Under \$25,000	18.2
\$25,000-50,000	16.8
\$50,000-75,000	25.1
\$75,000-100,000	18.2
\$100,000-125,000	10.0
\$125,000-150,000	6.2
Over \$150,000	5.5
Total	100.0

**Conference attendance:** Just under half of the respondents (47%) indicated that they attended one or two academic conferences in the last year; at the same time, as many as a quarter had not attended an academic conference in the past year.

Academic Conferences Attended in the Last Year	Percentage
None	25.3
One	26.6
Two	20.6
Three	18.2
Four or more	9.4
Total	100.0

**Membership in Professional Associations:** In addition to the Association for Jewish Studies, respondents belong to a wide variety of other associations, the distribution of which is consistent with the relatively large numbers of respondents who specialize in history and religious studies. The associations with the largest concentrations of respondents include: the American Academy of Religion (22%), the American Historical Association (20%), the Society of Biblical Literature (19%), and the Modern Language Association (15%).

Professional Memberships in addition to AJS	Percentage
American Academy of Religion	22.3
American Historical Association	19.6
Society of Biblical Literature	19.3
Modern Language Association	14.5
American Sociological Association	6.2
Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry	5.0
Middle East Studies Association	3.9
American Schools of Oriental Research	3.6
American Studies Association	3.6
American Anthropological Association	3.6
American Folklore Society	2.1
American Comparative Literature Association	2.1
American Philological Association	1.5
American Political Science Association	1.2
American Psychological Association	1.2
Archeological Institute of America	0.9
American Philosophical Association	0.9
American Academy of the Arts and Sciences	0.6

## AJS Membership

**AJS Services:** When asked to what extent respondents would like to see AJS provide or expand services, writing and research fellowships topped the list (61% and 59% answered “to a great extent,” respectively).

AJS should provide or expand these services to a great extent	Percentage
Writing fellowships	61.3
Research fellowships	59.4
Publication subventions	51.2
Book awards	43.1
Technology fellowships	34.9
Professional development	33.7
Support for international scholars	32.2
Resources for building programs	32.1
Programming throughout the year	22.2

**Reasons for belonging:** Respondents reported that they belonged to the AJS in order to support the field of Jewish studies (42%), and in order to participate in the AJS conference (40%).

Primary reason for AJS membership	Percentage
To support the field of Jewish studies	41.9
To participate in the AJS conference	40.4
To receive AJS Review and AJS Perspectives	9.6
To have access to the online positions listing	5.5
To have access to the online directory of fellowships and grants	2.6
Total	100.0

**AJS Conference Attendance:** More than half (52%) of respondents said that they attend the AJS conference every year or almost every year, whereas 24% indicated that they only attend when they are invited to participate in a session. Finally, 41% of respondents had their travel costs fully covered when they last attended an AJS conference.

How often do you attend the AJS conference?	Percentage
Every year	20.2
Almost every year	31.5
Only when it convenes near my geographic region	23.9
Only when I am invited to participate in a session	24.4
Total	100.0

Travel costs to attend the last AJS conference were covered by your institution or another source	Percentage
Fully	41.1
Partly	29.7
Not at all	23.7
Not sure	5.5
Total	100.0