It’s like a really big extended family. You don’t see them all the time, you don’t live with them, but when you do see them, you get a sense of home and comfort.”

— Erica Arbetter | Dallas, Texas

If you’re looking for a college where Jewish life and culture abound, the College of Charleston is the place for you. As an integral part of the Jewish Studies Program, the College’s Hillel is located directly in the center of Jewish life on campus – the Jewish Studies Center. The super-active Jewish student scene – along with Charleston’s thriving Jewish community – make the College an ideal option for Jewish students.

Nearly 8% of students at the College are Jewish.
At the College, you don’t just learn – you’ll be transformed. Our professors do much more than teach. They collaborate, innovate and inspire. They offer hands-on learning opportunities in Charleston’s booming start-up economy, its thriving arts and biomedical communities and the growing entrepreneurial scene.

At the College of Charleston Hillel, you will find students from many different majors involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. This wide variety of programming reflects our values of Jewish education, Tikkun Olam, Israel, inclusivity and leadership.

At Home with Hillel

Hillel is the home of Jewish Life at the College of Charleston – and a home away from home for you!

Did you know that Jewish events happen nearly every single day on campus? That’s right, during a typical week at Hillel you can find: Monday night Havurah (Jewish peer learning group), Tuesday baking with Challah for Hunger, Wednesday night Meet-to-Eat, Thursday Holocaust Awareness Education and Remembrance (HEAR) meetings, Shabbat student-led services with dinner on Fridays, and Sunday community brunches. Jewish Life at CoC has never been more active and diverse!

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Students here intern with companies such as Boeing, Bosch Google, Mercedez-Benz and Volvo, and many turn their internships into full-time work after graduation. And that’s just the beginning.

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Jewish Studies at CoC offers more than training in Jewish history, religion or literature. We are a team of committed faculty, here to help you acquire a broad set of tools for life: Writing, analyzing, researching, digitizing, global and intercultural fluency, creativity, problem solving and public speaking are just a few of the skills you will develop in our courses. With Jewish Studies, you can fulfill the College’s language requirement by taking Hebrew, German, or Arabic (and all count toward the Jewish Studies major). Our courses have no prerequisites and most also count toward fulfilling gen-ed requirements. Study abroad in many locations, including at Tel Aviv University and the University of Haifa in Israel, is also available.

FOR A FULL LIST OF MAJORS AND MINORS OFFERED AT THE COLLEGE, VISIT cofc.edu/academics/majorsandminors.

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1,420 (bagels) and 90 (pounds of lox served at events during 2019)
Charleston’s Jewish Heritage

Did you know that Charleston is the birthplace of Reform Judaism in the New World? That’s right. Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE), among the oldest synagogues in the U.S. (founded in 1749), was the first to adopt a Reform praying style in 1824. And KKBE is just three blocks from campus.

This city also boasts the country’s oldest Hebrew Orphan Society, the oldest Hebrew Benevolent Society and the first temple sisterhood. South Carolina’s Francis Salvador, elected to the Provincial Congress in 1774, became the first Jew in the western world to be elected to public office. These are just some examples of Charleston’s proud and longstanding Jewish heritage.

Today, Jewish life continues to thrive in Charleston. There are more than 10,000 Jewish people in the city. There are two synagogues within walking distance of campus; two Orthodox congregations, a Conservative synagogue, a Reform temple, a Chabad house, a day school and our own Jewish Studies Program at the College. There is also an annual Jewish arts and culture festival, Jewish books and film festivals and a city-wide Chanukah celebration.

“Expressing my religious identity was really important to me. It’s so easy to connect with my Judaism at the College. Being here has given me every opportunity to nurture my love of Judaism.”

— C.J. TORCELLINI, CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

“YOU KNOW YOU GO TO A GREAT SCHOOL WITH AN EXCELLENT JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM WHEN YOU’RE INTERNING AT AN AMERICAN JEWISH MUSEUM AND YOU SEE BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS WRITTEN BY YOUR PROFESSORS. I DEFINITELY MADE THE BEST DECISION IN GOING TO COFC.”

— Marla Topiol, Camden, New Jersey

At the College, the JSC is the go-to spot for:

- socializing
- networking
- studying
- eating, or
- meeting with professors.

The Jewish Studies Center (JSC) is also home to the College’s Hillel, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, the Zucker/Goldberg Center for Holocaust Studies, the Pearlstine/Lipov Center for Southern Jewish Culture and the Arnold Center for Israel Studies.

At the JSC, students, faculty and staff interact with each other and the broader Jewish community of Charleston. There are classrooms, a state-of-the-art meeting and conference room, offices, a student lounge and Marty’s Place – our kosher, vegan and vegetarian dining hall that is part of the campus meal plan. What’s not to like?