

Louis and Sarah Block Yeshiva High School
Judaic Studies Course Descriptions

Judaic Studies courses are taught by skill levels, rather than by grades. The levels are denoted as P, A, T, and H, and are intended to be only the first steps along the *PATH* of lifetime Torah study.

Talmud (Gemara)

Shiur P

This class seeks to help students develop both technical and comprehension skills in studying the original Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the Talmud (gemara), the classical compendium of Rabbinic discussions and rulings on religious law (halacha).

Shiurs A and T

Rashi's commentary is studied extensively, along with additional selected Tosfos commentaries, to gain conceptual familiarity with key explanations from the Rishonim where they are critical to a fundamental appreciation of the texts.

Shiur H

This honors Talmud class prepares students for independent study of the text and an analytical understanding of the differing opinions as represented through the Rishonim and Achronim

Torah (Chumash)

All Chumash classes have a bekiut component, wherein the entire volume is reviewed.

Shiurs P and A

Basic understanding of the original text and of Rashi's commentary. The student is aided in becoming proficient in translation and the study of Rashi. Other commentaries are introduced to help in expanding of the meaning of the Pasuk, the understanding of the Mitzvot and Mussar, and ethical teaching from each topic.

Shiurs T and H

Advanced understanding of the original text and commentators. An in-depth study of selected parshios from selected volumes of the Chumash. Students will learn to identify the problem that Rashi is addressing in each of his explanations to approach independently the commentary of the Ramban and understand the basis of each of his disputes with Rashi. The Malbim and other classical commentaries also figure prominently.

Prophets (Navi)

All Navi classes have an elective Chidon Tanach (contest) preparation course.

Shiur P: Early Prophets

Naviim Rishonim are reviewed and new material is reintegrated. A minor emphasis is on reading and translation skills. The class also reviews the Megilot readings for the various Holidays.

Shiur A and T: Kings

This thorough overview of Neviim and Ketubim will attempt to give students both a broad historical perspective and a profound appreciation for the ideologies and attitudes that the prophet wishes to convey. It is the expectation that each student will read, translate, and explain the pasukim according to Rashi and the Mesudots. The Radak and other classical works are introduced to understand the inherent content and better draw the ethical teachings of the Navi. The class also reviews the Megilot readings for the various Holidays.

Shiur H

Integrated topical Navi. Students are independent researchers, following the experimental methodology introduced by Mrs. Devorah Rosenwasser of the Jerusalem College for Women.

Jewish History

This course not only paints the vast panorama of the history of the Jews, but also gives students a sense of the patterns in history that reflect how Judaism perceives the unfolding of human events in a way consonant with an understanding of Torah and the divine purpose of mankind and the Jewish people.

Year 1: From Creation to the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry

Year 2: The Close of the Period of the Rishonim to the Rise of Chassidus

Year 3: 19th and 20th century Jewish History

Jewish Thought

Open discussions relating Torah philosophy to current events aim to give students an appreciation of how to synthesize Torah observance and involvement in contemporary American society and how Torah ideology is relevant in the modern world. A final paper or project takes the place of formal testing.

The class explores a major work in Jewish Philosophy (e.g. the Thirteen Principles of Faith as understood by the Rambam. The primary texts studied are the Rambam's Pairsush Ha Mishnayos and the YadHachazaca). The texts are prepared by the students in small groups to allow for stimulating classroom discussion. Contemporary Jewish thinkers and philosophers are used in order to broaden the ideas developed in class. The philosophy and hashkafa of the Jewish Holidays are also studied in this class.

Oral Torah (Torah She'Be'al Peh)

The focus of this course is to facilitate and develop within the student critical reading and complex argumentation resulting in practical, applied Jewish Law. Topics are chosen and then researched through Talmudic sources, classical commentaries, the Code of Jewish Law, and contemporary Jewish Law. Independent or small group preparation is essential and is accomplished based on the levels of each.

Shiur P: Jewish Law I

An overview of the entire Halachic system beginning with the Torah from Sinai until today. Selections from the Mishna and the Code of Jewish Law are introduced to the class.

Shiur A: Jewish Law II

Mishna and selected excerpts from the Talmud are introduced. The Mishna Brura, the most common commentary of the Code of Jewish Law, is a major focus of the class.

Shiur T: Jewish Law III

Mishna, Talmud, Rambam and the Code of Jewish Law are the main texts used with a strong emphasis of developing skills in analytical and critical thinking.

Shiur H: Jewish Law IV

Mishna, Talmud, Rambam and Code of Jewish Law are again the main texts used. Responses are also introduced as well as a stronger emphasis on developing skills in analytical and critical thinking.