

# Senior Judaic Studies Course of Studies 2023-2024

## Talmud

### **Senior Double Gemara/ Beit Midrash**

We will study topics in the 8<sup>th</sup> פרק (Chapter) of מסכת סנהדרין in great depth (עיון). The common theme underlying these topics is that they represent life and death dilemmas in halacha. Analyzing these topics will offer us insight into the Torah's perspective on how to weigh the value of human life when it clashes with other Torah values. We will also learn other parts of *Masechet Sanhedrin* at a faster pace [בקיאות] to be exposed to many different topics and pages of גמרא within our מסכת. The additional periods offered by the Beit Midrash Program affords us the opportunity to create an environment which is challenging and serious yet relaxed and enjoyable. The goal is that this environment will enable serious Torah learning and spiritual growth while also promoting the development of genuine friendships amongst the group.

### **Controversial Topics in the Talmud (*Bekiut*)**

This course will explore controversial topics and debates within the *Gemara* that are not typically covered in yeshiva high school. Topics include: the existence of demons and supernatural beings, the relationship between Judaism and Zionism, and the relationship between Jews and non-Jews. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper appreciation of the scope of the Talmud and better appreciate how complex Talmudic debates continue to inform Jewish thought and practice today.

### **Women, Talmud, & Jewish Law (Mrs. Septimus)**

This course will examine the halakhic status of women and their obligations in Jewish law, specifically focusing on their roles in *tefillah*, *shabbat* and holidays, and voluntary mitzvot. Students will explore concepts of personality, relationships, and modesty, and learn about Jewish marriage, *niddah*, and *mikvah*. Additionally, the course will delve into the challenges that young women face on college campuses and beyond. Throughout the course, students will analyze primary texts from the Talmud and other halakhic sources, as well as contemporary Jewish writings on women and Jewish law. They will develop critical thinking skills as they discuss and debate different interpretations and applications of Jewish law to women's lives. Students will have the opportunity to participate in interactive discussions and experiential learning, including a visit to local mikvah and opportunity to hear from women of varied life experiences.

## Tanach

### **Ancient Wisdom, Modern Life: Studying the Bible's Lessons for Today**

In this course, we will explore the books of *Mishlei*, *Kohelet*, *Iyov*, & *Tehillim*, which are known for their exploration of the human experience and the pursuit of wisdom. Through a

close reading of these Biblical texts, we will examine the themes of wisdom, morality, ethical living, and the limits of human reason and understanding. By the end of this course, you will have a deep understanding of the wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible and its relevance to our modern lives. You will also develop critical reading and analytical skills that will be useful in your future academic pursuits and religious lives.

### **From Sibling Rivalry to Forgiveness: Lessons on Family Dynamics from the Bible**

This course will explore the complex family dynamics and relationships in *Tanach*, with a particular focus on sibling rivalry and reconciliation. We will analyze specific examples such as Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and Aaron, and the drama within the Davidic royal family. What can we learn from these biblical narratives and how might they be relevant to contemporary understandings of family relationships?

## ***Halacha/Machshava***

### ***Halacha* after High School: Business and Medical Ethics in Jewish Law**

This course will explore the intersection of Jewish law, medicine, and business ethics. Students will examine various ethical issues that arise in medical and business contexts, and learn how Jewish law provides guidance on these issues. In the business ethics portion of the course, students will examine topics such as lending and borrowing, taking interest, fair business practices, and employer-employee relationships. Students will analyze case studies and learn how Jewish law and tradition can inform halakhic decision-making in these contexts. In the medical ethics portion of the course, students will examine topics such as physician-patient relationships, end-of-life decision-making, and organ donation. Students will analyze case studies and learn how Jewish law and tradition can inform ethical decision-making in these contexts. Throughout the course, students will engage with primary sources, including biblical and Talmudic texts, as well as contemporary rabbinic responsa. Students will also have opportunities to engage in group discussions and debates and deepen their understanding and love of *Halacha* and Jewish law.

### **Advanced Jewish Philosophy: God, Free Will, & the World to Come**

This course is an in-depth study of some of the most foundational questions in Jewish philosophy. Topics include: knowledge of God, purpose of creation, free will, the problem of evil and suffering, Olam HaBa, Mashiach, and Teshuvah. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to think critically and analytically about the philosophical issues at stake in these texts, as well as to develop their own philosophical positions in response. The course will culminate in a short research paper in which students will explore a particular topic or question within Jewish philosophy in greater depth.

## **Twelfth Grade Course of Study - Judaic Studies: 2023-24 Guidelines**

As you (Rising Seniors!) proceed through the advisement process, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. You must register for one course in each of the three bands. Each band represents courses that meet at the same time. You cannot register for more than one course in each band.
2. Double Gemara meets in both Bands 1 and 2. If you choose Double Gemara, you may choose any course from Band 3.
3. Twelfth grade women must register for *one* of the “Women, Talmud, and Halacha” sections listed in each of the three bands. You will be able to choose one course in each of the two remaining bands.
4. All courses require a minimum enrollment to be offered.
7. Teacher names are not listed alongside courses. Staffing may change as time goes on, and we cannot commit a course to a specific teacher.
8. The advisement process is important. We are all present to assist you in making the most optimal program for your senior educational experience. Your college advisers, teachers, department chairs and administration are all ready to help with your decisions.
9. Please speak to Mr. Miller if you have any questions.

**Please choose one course from each of the following three bands  
(Beit Midrash takes Bands both one and two.)**

<b>Band 1</b>	<b>Band 2</b>	<b>Band 3</b>
Beit Midrash	Beit Midrash	Advanced Jewish Philosophy
Controversial Topics	Advanced Philosophy	Controversial Topics
Women, Talmud, Law	Women, Talmud, Law	Women, Talmud, Law
Med/Bus Halacha	Med/Bus Halacha	Med/Bus Halacha
Family in Tanach	Wisdom in Tanach	Family in Tanach
		Wisdom in Tanach