

# JUDAIC STUDIES CURRICULUM



## **Hillel Yeshiva High School**

### **Judaic Studies Course Descriptions**

Hillel Yeshiva High School is committed to excellence in both Judaic and General Studies. We believe that our students will leave Hillel Yeshiva as well-rounded, God fearing Jews who will integrate Judaism into every aspect of their lives, from the Bet Midrash to the business world. The following are the goals of our Judaic Studies program:

- Our students will develop a love for Torah, the study of Torah and the observance of the Misvot.
- Our students will gain the knowledge they need to be active members of the Jewish community. They will take the knowledge, skills and character traits that they learn in Yeshiva and bring them into their lives and the lives of those around them. Our students will have the ability to help the community around them grow in the ways of the Torah.
- Our students will not only learn about the morals, ethics and values of the Torah; they will learn to integrate these lessons into their everyday lives. They will be individuals who are known for their Middot and who are able to create a Kiddush Hashem wherever they go.
- Our students will become “self-learning Jews,” who will be active participants in Torah learning. For some of our students this will translate into reading through the פרשה/Parasha every week. To others this will mean learning Talmud בהברותא (with a partner). And to some, it will mean being able to learn through the חומש /Humash with all the classic מפרשים (commentaries) or to delve into a “sugiya” (topic) in the Talmud.
- Our students are committed to the State of Israel. The creation of the State of Israel is one of the seminal events in Jewish history. By recognizing the significance of the state and its national institutions, we instill in our students an attachment to the State of Israel and its people as well as a sense of responsibility for their welfare.

#### **Curricular Requirements:**

Every student is required to complete four years of Judaic Studies. Each year our students take courses in תורה שבעל פה /TSBP, חומש /Humash, נביא /Prophets, הלכה /Jewish Law and Hebrew language. During the senior year, we offer all students a course in the philosophy of prayer.

#### **Humash :חומש**

Humash represents the first words of God to the Jewish people. As such it is the foundation of all Jewish learning. Our goal in teaching Humash is to help students to appreciate the profound religious values expressed by both the narrative and Halakhic

portions of Torah. We enable our students to develop textual skills and an ability to study the classical commentaries.

Each year the entire student body of Hillel High School studies one book of Humash. Over the four years of high school, students will cover בראשית/Bereshit, שמות/Shemot, ויקרא/Vayikra, and דברים/Debarim. (במדבר/Bemidbar is studied in 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

ספר בראשית (*The Book of Bereshit*) begins with God's creation of the universe and of humanity, and then tells the story of the birth and development of the Jewish people. We emphasize the lives of our forefathers and foremothers and examine how their characters shaped the destiny of our nation.

ספר שמות (*The Book of Shemot*), the oppression and redemption of the Jewish people express the ultimate Jewish value of freedom and the imperative that we treat all human beings with dignity. In our studies, we analyze the process of redemption as it culminates in the revelation of the Torah at Sinai and the building of the מִשְׁכָּן/Mishkan.

ספר ויקרא (*The Book of Vayikra*), which our students study for the first time in high school, we discuss the sacrifices and the role they play in Judaism. We study the service of Yom Kippur and the role of Kohanim. The second half of the book is devoted to both ethical and ritual laws. Our students study these important laws in depth and gain an understanding of the values they express and the impact they have on Jewish life.

ספר דברים (*The Book of Debarim*) consists of the powerful final words of Moshe to the Jewish people as they end the years in the desert and are about to enter the Land of Israel. They must build a society based on the religious and ethical values of Torah. Moshe's speeches include the paragraphs of שמע/Shema as well as Halakhic sections dealing with war, court systems, economic life and the rituals which make the Jewish people a light unto the nations.

### **נביא: Prophets**

Our primary goal in teaching נביא/ Prophets is to impart the powerful religious and ethical messages of these books which were composed by the great prophetic leaders of the Jewish people. We study the historical context of the books and thus gain an overview of Biblical history. Students discuss the idea of prophecy and gain insight into the personalities of the prophets. These courses continue to help students develop their skills in relating to Tanakh texts.

Over the four years of high school, students will study the books of Yehoshua, Shofetim, Melakhim, Yonah, Five Megilot, and Shemuel. The High Honors sections are on a different four year cycle where they study the book of Yonah, The Five Megilot, the books of Shemuel, Yirmiyahu, Yeshaya and Tehilim.

### **Jewish Law : הלכה**

Students study Halakha three periods a week. This course is designed to give our students the tools to be knowledgeable observant Jews. Students are taught the importance of knowing and following the Halakha. Each area of Halakha that is taught applies directly to their daily life. The Halakhot that are taught are developed from Biblical sources to Talmudic sources continuing through to early Rabbinic and contemporary sources. Through this process the students come to learn and understand the differences between Sefardic and Ashkenazic Halakha. The following topics are included in our Halakha curriculum:

- Laws of Prayer and Blessings – הלכות תפילה & ברכות
- Laws of Shabbat and Holidays – הלכות שבת & יום טוב
- Laws of Kashrut and related areas – הלכות כשרות
- Laws of Conduct between People, Laws Relating to לחברו- בין אדם לחברו
- Family Conduct
- Cycles of Life - תהליכי החיים

### **Philosophy of Prayer:**

Seniors are required to take a yearlong course in Prayer. In this course students have the opportunity to discuss openly some of the most fundamental ideas in Judaism which are expressed in our prayers. Topics include the study of: ברכות התורה - importance of learning Torah, אדון עולם, and 13 principles of faith, reward and punishment, *emunah*, the ברכה of עלם and the Jews as a “chosen” nation, the study of שמע and the עמידה. The course acquaints students with the writings of medieval and contemporary Jewish thinkers. One of the most important goals of this course is to show our students the beauty of prayer and a better understanding of the fundamental concepts of Judaism which are expressed in our daily prayers.

### **Oral Law : תורה שבעל פה**

The overall objective of TSBP study is to give our students an understanding and appreciation of the beauty of Oral Law. Teachers inspire students to see the beauty of the oral law and its application to daily life. Students learn fundamental skills and basic skills which form a basis upon which they can build in their future learning. In TSBP different tracks will use different sources in order to achieve the aforementioned goals. In our different tracks we offer the study of Talmud, Mishnah and Rambam’s משנה תורה.

The focus in the Talmud class is on the following:

- Careful reading of the text
- Keywords and syntax
- Analyzing the text and structure of the גמרא
- Delving into the comments of Rishonim.

Students will also learn and begin to understand the Halakhic Process and the Mesorah. At the end of each unit the Halakha that emerges from the גמרא/Talmud is developed and traced until today’s practical Halakha.

The מסכתות (tractates) that are selected and taught are conducive to the above goals. The particular מסכת (tractate) is studied by the entire school during that school year.

מסכתות:

- מסכת ביצה: פרק ראשון & שני - Masekhet Beitzah
- מסכת גיטין: פרק ראשון – Masekhet Gittin
- מסכת ברכות: פרק ראשון, שני, רביעי, שישי & שביעי - Masekhet Berakhot
- מסכת סוכה: פרק שני & שלישי - Masekhet Succah
- מסכת קידושין: פרק שני & רביעי - Masekhet Kidushin
- מסכת בבא קמא: ראשון, שני & שלישי - Masekhet Baba Kama
- מסכת פסחים: פרק עשירי - Masekhet Pesahim
- מסכת בבא מציעא: פרק ראשון & פרק רביעי – Masekhet Baba Mesia
- מסכת מועד קטן: פרק שלישי - Masekhet Moed Katan
- מסכת שבת - Masekhet Shabbat

Throughout the year, as each Jewish holiday approaches, students learn sugyot in גמרא /Talmud that provide insight into the laws and structure of the holiday.

**Boys High Honors Track:**

The high honors track studies Talmud eight periods per week. The extra time allows for more intensive analysis of the Gemara and its מפרשים (commentators). Time is allotted for students to study בחברותא (with a learning partner) which ultimately enables the students to become independent learners. This approach best readies our students for study in Yeshivot in Eres Yisrael, or higher learning in the United States, following graduation.

**Girls High Honors Track:**

The girls' high honors track studies TSBP for three periods a week. In this course students come to understand and appreciate how Halakha develops. All topics begin with the *gemara* and trace the Halakha through the *rishonim*, *Shulkhan Arukh* and contemporary *aharonim*. The topics that are chosen are practical and inspirational to the students' lives. Teachers will work with the students on skills, and syntax and vocabulary so that the students will achieve proficiency in learning. The skills and knowledge that our students achieve helps them excel at high level seminaries in Eres Yisrael.