



High School Judaics Overview

The Judaics program at Denver JDS High School builds on the foundation begun in middle school to provide each student with a rich base of knowledge and the essential skills needed to understand and engage in Jewish life and tradition. Each course is intellectually rigorous and offers a wide range of perspectives on Jewish stories, history, texts and laws. Students work closely with advisors to choose courses that pique their curiosity and reflect their specific interests within Judaism.

The Judaics curriculum for high school has two components.

- 1 Core (text-focused):**
 - 9th grade – one semester of tzedek seminar is mandatory
 - 10th grade – one semester of Israel seminar is mandatory
 - All other semesters of HS Core include choices such as: Various books of the prophets; Talmud; Jewish philosophy (Rambam), Halachah, Jewish holidays and more.
- 2 Options (text and non-text focused):**
 - Of the 8 semesters of high school at least four must be Judaic (could take all 8 if desired). Other Options include Talmud, Holocaust studies, Jewish history (Jewish Denver, American Jewish History), Jewish Culture (literature and film, comedy), Jewish life cycles, comparative religion, theories of justice and more.

Judaics Core classes are provided to 9th & 10th graders together, and 11th and 12th graders together. Judaic Options are 9-12.

Hebrew Immersion Program



Denver Jewish Day School's Hebrew Immersion Program (HIP) is a five-week study program in Israel for 10th grade students during which they have the opportunity to live with Israelis, deepen their Hebrew language skills, connect to Israel, and grow as they immerse themselves in Israel's culture and language.

Students study for five weeks with Israeli peers in Ramat HaNegev (JEWISHcolorado's partnership region) and spend time touring around Israel.

Making Israel their ultimate language lab, students interact in Hebrew with both peers and adults in formal and informal situations, combining intensive Hebrew language instruction with immersion. Through frequent hikes, excursions, and visits to places of note in the Ramat HaNegev region and throughout Israel, students get to experience the land of Israel up close. Most 2017-18 participants jumped one level of Hebrew during the five-week HIP experience.*

* As determined by Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) before students leave and after they return.

Israel / Israeli Culture



As a Zionist institution, Denver Jewish Day School supports Israel and fosters a love of the State among our students.

The study of Israel and Israeli culture is infused throughout Denver JDS and is prevalent throughout our classes, spreading into the hallways and throughout the school. Israeli music, poetry, and stories are often used in class, especially Hebrew and Judaic studies classes, and our teachers infuse the study of Israeli history and current events into discussion and programming.

Students in both the Lower and Upper Divisions also engage with our shinshinim (Israeli emissaries), giving them the opportunity to build relationships with and learn from another Israeli in the community, and helping them to build that strong connection to the people and the State of Israel. Additionally, holidays such as Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day) and Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day) are taught in the classroom and celebrated through school-wide programming.



Hebrew

Required through 10th grade; encouraged but not required in 11th and 12th grades. Approximately 90% of high schoolers continue with Hebrew all 4 years.

NEW! Judaic Advisory



New in the 2020-21 school year, students were each assigned a Judaic Advisor (JA). This same advisor will continue to guide them throughout their time at Denver JDS. Starting in the spring of 8th grade, students will meet with their advisor to discuss class choices, areas of interest and class changes. A student's JA will be their first point of contact if they are interested in graduating with a Judaic distinction or any other area of class / graduation personalization. In addition to serving as an important and valued counselor, JA's are also available for conversations about spirituality and finding meaning and engagement in Judaism.

Graduating with Judaic Distinctions

Denver JDS offers interested students several opportunities to dive deeply into an area of focus within Judaics. Advisors are happy to discuss areas of interest and create individualized plans.

Distinction Options Include:

Tzedek (Justice)

Requirements:

Four (4) semesters of Tzedek-based classes, all completed with a passing grade. 18 hours of community service each school year.

Community Service: attendance at three (3) Tzedek Program service activities per year, or a total of nine (9) over a student's 9th, 10th, and 11th grade years of high school.

Students seeking to graduate with this distinction should demonstrate a leadership role in the Tzedek Program. In a student's final year at DJDS, each student graduating with distinction in Tzedek must plan, lead, and execute a Tzedek program.

Completion of the Tzedek Capstone course in 11th or 12th grade. Students choose a real-world problem to research and engage with. In their final capstone presentation, they demonstrate a unique understanding of their chosen issue and have engaged in a variety of actions not limited to meeting with an expert in the field, volunteering their time, or fundraising for a cause.

Students graduating with distinction in Tzedek have a deep understanding and appreciation of the Jewish values of Chesed - Kindness, Tzedek - Justice, Tzedakah - Giving, and Tikun Olam - Repairing the World, and are prepared to be leaders when they graduate.

Judaic Studies

Requirements:

This distinction includes grade requirements and a newly implemented application process that begins at the end of 10th grade. Students will evaluate what they've taken so far, why they chose those courses, and what the courses have meant to them.

Advisors will offer recommendations to help each student to approach their Judaic course load with a real sense of purpose so that each class helps the student develop and enhance their understanding of Judaism. Advisors play an important role in helping students fill in Judaic gaps and find a sense of breadth and depth in their studies. Students are actively supported as they continue to push themselves, pursue their interests and regularly reflect on what their DJDS education has meant.



Denver Jewish Day School faculty aim to create within their students a commitment to lifelong learning, inspired by knowledge of and appreciation for the wisdom, spiritual depth, and ethical guidance of Judaism and traditional Jewish texts. We are committed to working closely with each student to make their individual journey as rich and meaningful as possible.



For further questions, please contact:

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