

Judaic Studies Curriculum

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Grades Seven - Eight

GRADE SEVEN HEBREW LANGUAGE ARTS

For teaching Hebrew in grades 7-12, Gray Academy uses the innovative program Neta. Based on the proficiency approach in language learning, Neta simultaneously trains all four language skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This enables students to use Hebrew in concrete situations right from the first lesson and to study towards becoming independent users of Hebrew. The textbooks of Neta contain a dynamic choice of texts, which deal with Israel, Judaism and general topics. This variation trains students to apply vocabulary and grammar patterns in various contexts. Each grade is divided into three or four classes, each at a different level. This allows each student to study at his/her pace and abilities.

ASSESSMENT:

This course will be assessed through classroom participation, quizzes, and tests.

RESOURCES:

Neta coursebooks

TIME: 2 semesters

GRADE SEVEN TANAKH: FROM JUDGES TO KINGS

Following the entrance of the Israelites into the Land of Israel under Joshua, the Jewish nation experienced different leadership styles. Shmuel 1 and 2 focus on the shift from the style of judges to the reign of kings.

Outline:

Shmuel

- The birth and youth of Shmuel
- The leadership of Shmuel
- Israel gets their king

Shaul and David

- The rule and downfall of Shaul
- Shaul meets David
- David and Goliath
- Shaul and David: conflict

King David

- The reign of David begins
- David's reign and Strength
- David and Batsheva
- David and Absalom

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their historical understanding of this period and on the stories narrated in the books. Assignments, quizzes and homework are an integral part of the course.

Resources:

Shmuel 1 and 2
Classical commentaries

Time: 2 semesters

GRADE SEVEN TORAH SHEBE`AL PEH (ORAL TORAH)

In this course the students study traditional Jewish texts through analysis and are challenged to develop critical thinking skills.

Outline:

- Understand how the Oral Torah complements the Written Torah
- Develop familiarity with some of the main personalities of the Mishnah, e.g. Hillel and Shammai, Rabban Gamliel, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Yehuda haNasi
- Study the internal structure of the Oral Torah
- Explore the historical development and different layers in the Oral Torah
- Be able to analyze the process of rabbinic decision making
- Understand the difference between majority and minority opinion
- Understand why it is important to record a minority opinion
- Understand that halakhah is dynamic and develops over time
- Understand that every Jew in every generation has a voice in this ongoing discussion

Assessment:

Homework, quizzes and projects are part of the assessment.

Resources:

V'Shinantam – Mishnah in Sound, Depth and Color, Year 2.

Time: 1 semester

GRADE SEVEN: ROOTS PROJECT

Jews have lived in many countries for many centuries. We have a rich Diaspora history as we have created communities wherever we have settled. In this course, the students will become familiar with Jewish life in Manitoba and learn about the challenges of Jewish immigration to Canada. They will also explore the richness of Jewish life and how Jewish immigrants contributed to the development of a multicultural society. This course culminates with an extended research project and presentation on each student's family roots.

Outline:**Immigration: General Introduction**

- Jewish immigration to Manitoba: first two waves
- Difficulty in new land

- Economic adaptation
- Farming colonies

History of Jews in Manitoba

- Golden Years: 1890-1914
- War and Crisis: 1914-1930
- Years of Struggle: 1930-1945
- Consolidation and expansion

Roots Project

- Research project and presentation of Roots project
- Interview family members about family history
- Conduct research in community archives
- Research the origin of students' family surnames

Assessment:

Students will be tested on their knowledge and understanding of the history of Jewish Manitoba and will present their roots project in a creative and thoughtful way.

Resources:

Arthur A. Chiel, *The Jews in Manitoba*

Harry Gutkin, *Journey of the Jewish People in the Canadian West.*

Jewish Heritage Centre - Historical archives

Time: 1 semester

GRADE SEVEN EXPLORATIONS IN JUDAISM

As students celebrate their Bar and Bat Mitzvah, they come of age according to Judaism. It is therefore time to take their rightful place in the Jewish community. Students will begin to explore the role and development of Jewish Law as it influences Jewish practice. The course is divided into three sections that are the pillars of Jewish life.

Course outline:

Torah

- Concept of responsibility in Jewish Law
- The Hebrew calendar as related to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Finding personal meaning in the Torah
- Learning how to write and say a Dvar Torah

Tefilah

- The world of Tefilah (prayer)
- Navigating the Siddur

Mitzvah

- History of Jewish Law
- Concept of Mitzvah
- Exploring the Mitzvah of Tzedaka according to our traditional sources

Rhythms of Jewish Life

- The Babaganewz magazine monthly theme

Assessment:

This course will be assessed through active participation, quizzes, tests and varied presentations.

Resources:

Classical sources: Tanakh, Mishnah , Maimonides' Mishne Torah
Babaganewz magazine and interactive web-site

Time:

2 semesters

GRADE EIGHT: HEBREW LANGUAGE ARTS

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Assessment:

This course will be assessed through classroom participation, quizzes, and tests.

Resources:

Neta coursebooks

Time: 2 semesters

GRADE EIGHT: TANAKH: KINGS AND WARRIORS

From Solomon's rise to power, to the destruction of the First Temple, Melakhim 1 and 2 focus on this critical time period in Jewish history and delve into the power of leadership.

Outline:

King Solomon

- Solomon becomes king
- The reign and power of Solomon

The historical Schism

- Downfall and division of the kingdom
- Kings and prophets
- Elijah and Elisha

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their historical understanding of this period and on the stories narrated in the books. Assignments, quizzes and homework are an integral part of the course.

Resources:

Melakhim 1 and 2

Classical commentaries

Time: 2 semesters

GRADE EIGHT: MAJOR ISSUES IN BIBLICAL HISTORY

Knowledge and understanding of our history is a central component of our Jewish identity. Knowing how our people and traditions have evolved, will help us understand who we are and where we want to go. In this course we focus on the Biblical period and study the lives of some major figures in these times.

Outline:

- A state founded on an idea: Torah as a blueprint for society
- The struggle towards a just society in the books of the prophets
- Destruction and exile in the books of wisdom
- Return and rebuilding: Ezra and Nehemiah

Assessment:

The students will create a timeline for Biblical history. They will demonstrate knowledge of both Jewish history and the historical process the Jewish people have undergone. Assignments, quizzes and homework are an integral part of the course.

Time: 1 semester

GRADE EIGHT: CURRENT TOPICS IN THE JEWISH WORLD

This course explores the way different events affect the Jewish world. The students will study how the media cover Israel and the Jewish world. They will develop a critical sense and understanding of those events.

Outline:

Israel

- Society issues: different population groups
- Cultural events: music, theatre, movie and the arts
- Political situation: actual developments in the political sphere and media coverage

Jewish World

- New anti-Semitism: understanding current anti-Semitism
- Cultural events: music, theatre, movie and the arts
- Political and society dilemmas: Jewish life in the Diaspora

Assessment:

The students will actively participate in researching and understanding the many themes covered in this course through class discussions and research.

Resources:

Jerusalem Report, Moment, Babaganewz magazine
Media and internet

Time: 1 semester

GRADE EIGHT: KOSHER LAW

Kosher is not only about food but a way of life. In this course the student will explore the laws of kashrut and deal with issues of business and medical ethics.

Outline:

Dietary Laws

- Kashrut in the Torah and in Rabbinical law
- The prohibition of mixing meat and dairy products
- Kosher fish and meat
- Shechita, ritual slaughter
- Kashrut Certification
- The Kosher Cookbook

Kosher Ethics

- Business ethics; money, copyright, competition
- Medical and science ethics; modern applications of halakhic concepts, animal testing, respect of the sick and dead, ecology

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their knowledge of kashrut and on their ability to use Jewish concepts while looking at medical, scientific and business issues. They will also present a Kosher Cookbook that will summarize, in a creative way, their understanding of the dietary laws.

Resources:

Rabbi E. Eidlitz, *Is it Kosher?* Feldheim Publications
Ronald H. Isaacs, *Exploring Jewish Values*, Ktav Publishing House

Time: 2 semesters