

Judaic Studies Curriculum

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Grades Nine - Twelve

GRADE NINE: 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 NINE COMPULSORY: JEWISH 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 year-long course we study Jewish history from the first century CE until the dawn of Modernity.

As preparation for the grade nine trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, we also study a large unit on political, historical, social and cultural aspects of the destruction of European Jewry during WWII. It covers the events leading up to and including genocide. Students will learn about this time period using a variety of sources including literature, journals, guest speakers, films and discussions.

Timeline:

Survey of Jewish History:

- The political and religious situation in the Land of Israel in the first century CE
- The Babylonian Diaspora
- The Jews of Spain and the Sephardic Diaspora
- The Jews in Germany and Northern France
- Expulsions and the movement to Eastern Europe

Historical and ideological background of the Holocaust:

- Theories of Race
- Antisemitism and prejudice
- Hitler and the rise of the Nazis
- Nazism and Racial purity

First steps towards annihilation:

- Policies against the Jews and the Nuremberg laws
- Kristallnacht

War and destruction

- World War II
- Resistance
- Ghettos, segregation and concentration camps; from deportation to annihilation

Assessment:

The students will actively participate and be tested on their understanding of the above subjects. They will also present a project connected to the themes covered in the course.

Resources:

Jonathan D. Sarna and Jonathan B. Krasner, *The History of the Jewish People – A Story of Tradition and Change*.

Books and materials from “Yad Vashem”

Publications from American Holocaust Museum in Washington.

Time: 2 semesters

For Judaic Studies Electives in grade nine: see Judaic Studies Electives in grade ten.

GRADE TEN: 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 TEN COMPULSORY: GEMILUT HASADIM

The Mishna in Pirkei Avot teaches us that the world is sustained by three things: Torah, Avodah (worship) and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of kindness). This course focuses on the moral mitzvot and an understanding of the strong moral sense of our tradition. The students are also involved in the very successful program "Youth in Philanthropy", where they learn the basics of charitable giving and decision making skills. They are also required to do 30 hours of volunteering in a non-profit organization as the chesed component of the program.

This coming year (2008-2009), Gray Academy is among five schools that will pilot a newly developed curriculum by Ravsak, the Jewish Community Day School Network. Project ROPE (Roots of Philanthropy Education) studies Classical Jewish sources on gemilut hasadim in general as well as focuses on gemilut hasadim in relation to one particular group in our community: the elderly. In addition to studying the sources on this particular subject, the students will assess local needs for members of this group and organize a fund-raising project.

Outline:

Gemilut Hassadim:

- Tsedaka
- Tikkun Olam
- Lashon Hara
- Visiting the sick
- Poverty and homelessness

Youth in Philanthropy

- Exploring the different non-profit organizations dealing with the improvement of society

- Deciding where to give the money they are granted and justifying the choice through a learning process of the issues at stake

Assessment:

The students will be tested on the understanding of the moral values of our Tradition and will have to present a creative approach to one of those values. The students will have to fully participate in the “Youth in Philanthropy” project showing leadership skills and formulating ethical arguments according to their personal judgment. The students will have to volunteer their time and efforts for their Chesed project.

Resources:

Classical sources: Torah, Mishna, Rabbinic texts
ROPE curriculum on Gemilut Hasadim.

Time: 2 semesters

GRADES NINE-TEN ELECTIVE: SINAI AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

This elective offers an in-depth reading of the Ten Commandments and the notion of revelation of the Torah as described in the Biblical narrative and as understood by rabbinical teachings.

Outline:

- Introduction to the notion of Revelation: “We were all at Sinai”
- Anokhi; is belief in God a commandment?
- Idolatry: who are those *other gods*?
- God’s name in vain: the power of speech
- Shabbat: a palace in time.
- Parental authority: what are the limits?
- Murder, adultery and theft in the Torah
- False witness
- You shall not covet
- The Ten Commandments as part of the 613 Mitzvot

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their understanding of the Ten Commandments and their various applications. They will produce a creative project about the “Ten Commandments today” aimed at relating the Biblical text to modern day situations.

Resources:

Torah, Classical commentaries and Nehama Leibowitz’s, *Studies in the Weekly Parasha*.

Rachel S. Mikva (ed.), *Broken Tablets: Restoring the Ten Comandments and Ourselves*.

Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath*.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES NINE-TEN ELECTIVE: MODERN ISRAEL

This course will offer a critical look at Israeli culture and society. Students will work to understand the historical and ideological background of Israeli culture and society.

Outline

Tzahal- Israel Defense Force

- History
- Structure
- War ethics
- Influence on society

Aliyot – Kibbutz Galuyot

- History
- Various communities
- Melting pot; the New Israeli

Religious and Secular in Israel

- Differences
- Conflict
- Jewish character of the State of Israel

What makes an Israeli?

- Different voices and definitions
- Jew or Israeli?

Assessment:

The students will be tested on the knowledge and understanding of elements of modern day Israeli culture and society and will explore and research some of those issues.

Resources:

Materials and publications from the Jewish Agency, the Jerusalem Post and the Jerusalem Report
Mordecai Naor, *Zionism - The First 120 Years*.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES NINE-TEN ELECTIVE: JUDAISM THROUGH THE ARTS

This course explores Jewish expression through various art forms. This is a hands-on course which enables the student to express their creativity while focusing on the Jewish aspect of the art.

Outline:

Historical introduction:

- What is Jewish art? Is there Jewish art?
- Judaism and artistic expression: the dilemma of the second Commandment.

Exploring Jewish Art:

- Ritual objects
- Architecture
- Music
- Fine arts
- Photography
- Media

Assessment:

The students will produce a portfolio of their creations and will have to actively participate during the various art assignments.

Resources:

“Art”, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, volume III, cols. 499-644.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES NINE-TEN ELECTIVE: KEHILLOT ISRAEL

This course explores the different communities in the Jewish world, their customs, traditions and history. The students will learn about people in diaspora including Gypsies, Falasha and African Americans. The students will research one specific Jewish community and present it to the class.

Outline:

Jewish Communities

Speakers will come from various Jewish Communities to explain their traditions and cultures and expose the students to different heritages.

Students will be exposed to different cultures through movies and will respond to their significance to the Jewish people as a whole.

Other Diasporas

- The Gypsy Diaspora
- The African American Diaspora

Kehila project

- In depth research of a Jewish community, its history and customs

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their understanding of the different Jewish communities and compare them with other diasporas. They will write an in depth study on one of the Jewish communities in the world.

Resources:

Eli Barnavi (ed.), *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*.

Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas*.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES NINE-TEN ELECTIVE: SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Since the Middle-ages the question of science and religion as two competing and sometimes contradictory sources of knowledge has been the center of discussions between theologians and scientists. Judaism has found many ways to deal with questions and we will focus on those ways of perceiving the specific relations between the two.

Outline:

- Introduction: the problem, belief versus science
- Creation of the World – Big Bang
- Creation of Man – Evolution theory (Darwin)
- Miracles and the Laws of Nature
- Shabbat and modern life
- Related Issues

Assessment:

The student will present one of the issues related to the science and religion dilemma and will be tested on the understanding of the essential differences between the two disciplines.

Resources:

Nathan Aviezer, *Biblical Creation and Science*.
Rabbi Levi Maier (ed.), *Jewish Values in Bioethics*.
Daniel C. Matt, *God and the Big Bang*.

Time: 1 semester

GRADE TEN ELECTIVE: MONOTHEISM AND IDOLATRY

Introduction:

What is monotheism and why is idolatry such an abomination for the Jewish Tradition? The Jewish tradition has a lot of different definitions and understandings of monotheistic faith and idolatrous practices. Every generation perceived idolatry in different ways. This course will offer a Biblical and philosophical perspective on the core beliefs of the Jewish Tradition.

Outline:**Introduction**

- Different beliefs in God, mapping of theological positions

Monotheism

- Monotheism in the Torah
- Abraham and Monotheism
- Emunah, Faith and Belief
- The principles of Faith according to Maimonides

Idolatry

- Idolatry in the Torah and the sin of the Golden Calf
- Different approaches to idolatry - Idolatry today?

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their understanding of the different religious concepts and on the basics of Judaism as articulated by our great philosophers. They will also present a project related to those themes. Assignments, quizzes and discussions are an integral part of the course.

Resources:

Torah and commentaries
Menahem Kellner, *Do Jews Have to Believe in Something?*
The Thirteen Principles by Maimonides
Avishai Margalit and Moshe Halbertal, *Idolatry*

Time: 1 semester

GRADE ELEVEN: 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 ELEVEN COMPULSORY: THE JEWISH LIFECYCLE

This course focuses on two major life events: marriage and family life, and death and mourning.

Outline:

Marriage and family life

- Love and commitment
- Engagement (Irusin)
- Ketubah
- Wedding ceremony
- The marriage canopy
- The seven Blessings
- The bridal week
- Family purity

Death and mourning

- From the moment of death to the funeral service
- The funeral service and the internment
- Mourning observances of Shiva, Sheloshim and year-long mourning practices
- Yizkor and Yahrzeit

Assessment:

The students will have to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the laws covered through tests and quizzes and will have to actively participate in the learning process. The students will have to write a book report.

Resources:

Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*.

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, *Made in Heaven*

Time: 2 semesters

For Judaic Studies Electives in grade eleven: see Judaic Studies Electives in grade twelve.

GRADE TWELVE: 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 TWELVE COMPULSORY: SHOAH STUDIES

Shoah studies is an in-depth course that develops from the rise of anti-Semitism to the end of WWII. While focusing on this tragic event in history, the course also emphasizes the significance of tolerance, understanding, and human rights as they relate to our world today.

Outline:

Historical background of anti-Semitism

- Stereotypes and prejudices, Classical, Christian and Modern anti-Semitism

The historical and cultural background to Nazi Germany

- German society after WWI
- Adolf Hitler and *Mein Kampf*

The Final Solution

- Totalitarianism and the Fascist State
- The war and the "Final Solution"
- Resistance, rescuers and bystanders

The aftermath

- Survivors, coping with tragedy on a personal and national scale

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their understanding of the historical process that occurred in the years before the War and throughout the aftermath. The students will write extensive book reports on a fiction and non-fiction book and present a major project about a theme covered in the course. Assignments, quizzes, homework and discussions are an integral part of the course. They will also participate in the Mina Rosner Holocaust and Human Rights Essay Contest.

Resources:

Books and materials from “Yad Vashem” publications and the American Holocaust Museum in Washington.

Various movies pertaining to anti-Semitism, racism and the Holocaust

Speakers - survivors

Time: 1 semester

GRADE TWELVE COMPULSORY: JEWISH ETHICS

This course will focus on the basic tenants of decision making in ethical dilemmas as well as the Jewish view on a variety of issues. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their moral awareness with regards to themselves, their families, their community and the world.

Outline:

- Dialogical process as basis for decision-making in Judaism
- *BeTzelem Elohim*: basis for ethical thought in Judaism
- Analysis of individual topics (sexuality, gender issues, end-of-life decisions, community building, ecological responsibility).

Assessments:

Students will be assessed on their classroom participation, there will also be tests, quizzes and a project.

Resources:

Student reader

Time: 1 semester

GRADES ELEVEN-TWELVE ELECTIVE: ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Most of the student's knowledge about the Arab-Israeli conflict comes from the immediate events occurring in Israel. This course will explore the historical, political and military background and context of the conflict. This course is a political science course based on the analysis of historical and political developments in the Middle-East.

The course has two goals: To provide the knowledge for understanding the background and the views of the different parties in the conflict, and how to present a balanced explanation of the conflict to a third party. This course will help to prepare our grade eleven-twelve students to respond adequately to political activities on university campuses.

Outline:

- Zionist Aliyot from Europe, end of 19th century
- British mandate over Palestine
- 1919-1939: Creation of Transjordan, rise of Hitler, White paper
- Second World War, Partition plan
- 1948: Creation of the State, War of Independence
- Wars of Israel: Yom Kippur War, Six-Day War, Lebanon War, Intifada's,
- The Palestinians
- Peace process with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians
- Israel Advocacy
- Current events in perspective

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their ability to understand historical and political processes through tests, quizzes and active participation.

Resources:

Student reader from The David Project

A. Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*.

Materials and publications from The Jewish Agency for Israel

Documentaries on the history of the conflict

Time: 1 semester

GRADES ELEVEN-TWELVE ELECTIVE: BEING JEWISH IN THE MODERN WORLD

This course offers an in-depth overview of the main streams of modern Jewish life. The students learn about the different Jewish ideologies. They also have an opportunity to listen to various Rabbis and community leaders about the stream or movement they represent.

Outline:**Historical background to the different movements:**

- Haskala and the beginnings of modern Jewish history
- Hassidim and Mitnagdim
- Beginnings of Reform and Orthodox movement in Germany

Streams in the Jewish world:

- Orthodoxy
- The Reform movement
- The Conservative movement
- The Reconstructionist movement
- The Renewal movement

Exploring my own Jewish identity

- Reflecting on your personal affiliation and identity

Assessment:

The students will be tested on an understanding of the different streams of Jewish life and will actively participate in the discussions. The students will also produce a thoughtful position paper on their personal view of Jewish life.

Resources:

Representatives of the various movements

Paul Mendes Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World – A Documentary History*.

Jack Wertheimer (ed.), *The Modern Jewish Experience – A Reader's Guide*.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES ELEVEN-TWELVE ELECTIVE: COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Although we live in a secularized world, religion is an essential part of our culture and society. The understanding of world religions offers the student an opportunity to discover other religions while comparing them to their own.

Outline:**The peoples of the Book(s): Judaism, Christianity and Islam**

- Holy Scriptures: Torah, New Testament, Koran and related literature
- Holy Prophets: Moshe, Jesus and Mohamed
- Traditions: Worship, practices and rituals
- Theology: Values and Beliefs
- Diversity: streams, branches and affiliations

World religions:

- Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age

Assessment:

The students will be tested on their understanding of the many aspects of the different religions and will produce creative works (movie, scrapbook, narrative) on each of them.

Resources:

Syllabus with source material.

Time: 1 semester

GRADES ELEVEN-TWELVE ELECTIVE: JEWISH FILM AND LITERATURE

This course provides the students a seminar-style course that celebrates modern Jewish creativity through literature and film. The works of well-known Jewish writers and filmmakers will be explored.

Outline-Resources:**Short Stories**

- *The Conversion of the Jews*, Philip Roth
- *The Rabbi's Son*, Nachman of Breslav
- *The Swimming Contest*, Benjamin Tammuz
- *Bontcha the Silent*, I.L Peretz
- *The 27th Man*, Nathan Englander
- *If Not Higher*, I.L Peretz
- *The Mourners*, Bernard Malamud
- *My Grandmother's Hands*, Alexander Baron
- *The Fable of the Goat*, S.Y. Agnon

Poetry

- A.M. Klein
- Irving Layton
- Yehuda Amichai

Film

- Mother Night
- Liberty Heights
- The Believer

Assessment:

This seminar style course focuses on reading of the texts and active participation in the round-table discussions. The students will also have to hand in a book report.

Time: 1 semester