STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SELECT A BALANCE OF COURSES OVER THE FOUR YEARS FROM DIVISIONS A, B, C, AND D.

Course Divisions Are Included For Each Class With The Course Number. For example, D3540 is a course that satisfies the “D” requirement.

Courses are listed by Division and are in no particular order.

Seniors are required to take a Senior Seminar, Division R.

MERKAZ WANTS YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR JEWISH STUDIES

If Tuesday nights don’t work for you, we have other options. Independent studies, community service projects, and online classes are just a few of the ways we can make this work together.

If you have band, dance, a sport or an overwhelming schedule don’t discount participating. We have made it work for so many students over the years. Let’s have a conversation and together we can find something interesting to you and keep you on a track to graduation with your class.
### JEWISH PEOPLE’S COURT

**Course # A3900**  
Faculty: Rabbi Marcelo Kormis  
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY  
Fall 6:55

The Bet Din, or Jewish Court, has been an integral part of the long and important history of the development of Jewish law and ethics. It continues to function, even in the modern world. Explore how the Jewish legal system operates, the traditional sources from which the ethics of the Jewish people are derived. See a Jewish people’s court in action in modern everyday situations. Decide cases for yourself. You be the judge.

### EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT JUDAISM BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

**Course # A4100**  
Faculty: Rabbi Shlame Landa  
Grade: 9 – 12  
Spring 8:00

Why do we say Mazal Tov? Why do we say that the Jews are the Chosen people? And why is this not racism? Why do we place stones on a headstone? Why are heart valves from a pig kosher? Why are eggs pareve yet the chicken who makes them are meat? Why is milk dairy and yet the cow that it comes from is meat? Come ready to argue, debate, and ask!

### SUPERHEROES – AN INTRODUCTION

**Course # A4011**  
Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin  
Grade: 9 – 12  
Fall 6:55 OR Fall 8:00

Superheroes movies for the past years continue to dominate Hollywood with their stories. The Jewish influence found in these films cannot be overstated. In *Batman, The Avatar of Justice*, we learn about vigilantism, revenge vs. justice and risking your life to save others. We learn from *Spiderman*, "that with great powers comes great responsibilities”. And with *X-men*, that violence is not the solution to bigotry and hatred. Students will choose the films, watch, analyze, question and debate issues relating to it.
The challenges of a superhero never end. Do they ever retire? Will evil finally disappear from mankind and we will have no need for them. Will superheroes accept and respect other superheroes who are doing the same job? In the latest offerings from Hollywood, e.g. Superman Verses Batman, Daredevil and the upcoming Captain America-Civil War, these questions among others will be addressed. Join us for an exciting continuation of a popular course at Merkaz.

Did you know that Kabbalah study was traditionally restricted to people over 40? Get a preview into the exploration of spirituality, Kabbalah, and mysticism considering lifelong questions including: What am I doing here? What is the meaning of life? How do I overcome circumstances? What does it mean to be Jewish? How can I make my life more meaningful and fulfilled? What happens after death? This course will provide a Jewish perspective on spirituality, and will guide how you perceive and experience the world with greater meaning, happiness, and well-being.

The discovery process of the concealed world, on both the outer and inner dimension, is ongoing. Join this course as we journey together in new areas of spirituality and go deeper into subjects such as: the purpose of creation, my role in it, how did I get here and where am I going, why do things happen – both good and bad, how is it that I am Jewish, what’s up with relationships – family and friends, the truth, trust, and love, and so much more. They don’t teach this stuff in high school and not in college either. Take advantage of this opportunity to grow personally and impact the world. (Pre-requisite: Kabbalah I Class)
DID HOLLYWOOD GET IT RIGHT?
Course # A4410          Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin
Grade: 9 – 12          Spring 6:55

The Bible Comes To The Big Screen!” The New Yorker,” a popular weekly magazine recently pointed out an amazing statistic: “the bible is not only the best-selling book of all time it is the best-selling book of the year every single year. So it’s no wonder that Hollywood has made efforts of bringing these stories to the big screen. In this course we will select and examine the accuracy and honesty in the Hollywood version from past movies such as, Cecil B DeMille’s classic blockbuster “The Ten Commandments, Darren Aronofsky $130 million Version of Noah, and the Ridley Scott production “Exodus of God and Kings among others.

BUILDING COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR LIFE
Course # B4007          Faculty: Marjorie Schulman
Grade: 9 – 12          Fall 8:00

Each of us has the potential to become a good listener, an effective leader, a problem solver, and someone who can make a difference. Explore your own style of communication and leadership styles, and learn decision-making skills. Discover your emerging identity and what is important to you for living your life with confidence, courage, and respect.

JEWISH NOT SO TRIVIAL PERSUIT
Course # B3250          Faculty: Ricka Breiner
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY      Spring 8:00

Gain an overview of general Jewish knowledge in a fun way. Through questions, answers and board games find out how much there is to learn. Also, in the style of both “Jeopardy” and sages, learn that a good question is frequently more important than a good answer.

YOGA AND JEWISH MEDITATION
Course # B4012          Faculty: Niema Hirsch
Grade: 9-12              Fall 6:55 OR Spring 6:55

Hebrew Mantras, Yoga postures and breathing will calm you after a busy day. Learn the wisdom of Jewish meditation as taught by our modern rabbis. Yoga and meditation can awaken your soul and offer an alternative to siddur based rituals. Immerse yourself in something different and relax.
The college selection and admissions process can sometimes be a stressful and most often challenging process. Through this popular Merkaz course, learn how to more effectively organize and participate in this process. Special attention will be paid to factors which Jewish applicants should consider when exploring, evaluating and choosing their schools. Merkaz participation is an important feature to include in your application along with other tips provided in this class to help you stand out!

**DOING THE RIGHT THING**

Course # B4060  
Faculty: Rabbi Marcelo Kormis  
Grade: 9 – 12  
Spring: 6:55

How do you know when you are doing the right thing? What influences your decisions to behave in ethical ways? What are your beliefs and values about right and wrong, good and evil, and do your actions usually reflect what is important to you? How do you respond to conflicting beliefs or desires? It’s not always easy! In this class, we will explore and discuss such topics as lying and deception, political and economic ethics, war and peace, sexual and gender ethics, and biomedical ethics. Learn from your peers, Jewish ethics and text, and philosophy.

**I JEW – IS THERE AN APP FOR THAT?**

Course # B7200  
Faculty: Ira Wise  
Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY  
Spring 6:55

We will not be turning off our iPhones and Androids for this class. Can we find God in Instagram or Snapchat? Can Facebook teach us how to be ethical? Can we make technology help us to be MORE Jewishly connected, knowledgeable and fulfilled? Or will it just lead to being enslaved by our computer overlords? We WILL explore how we can use apps to find ... enlightenment? You do not need to bring your own device, but you may if you want to!

**JEWS IN THE NEWS**

Course # B3290  
Faculty: Ricka Breiner  
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY  
Fall 8:00

How do the happenings in the Middle East affect you? What happened at the White House this week? Who’s who in the Jewish world? These and many more questions will be answered each week as we take an in-depth look at the world around us. Analyze current events from a variety of sources including both Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers, magazines, and other media. Discuss and debate the morals, ethics, and legality of issues from a Jewish perspective.
INSPIRING STORIES OF HOPE AND SURVIVAL
Course # B4130 Faculty: Carole Rubin
Grade: 9 – 12 Fall 6:55

What enables people to triumph over life’s challenges and unexpected situations? This is an amazing opportunity to meet and hear inspirational and life-changing stories of resilience, perseverance, optimism, and hope. Get a personal and inside view of people who have been confronted with difficult challenges in their lives including loss, illness, adversity, and tragedy. How did they cope during the most difficult times? What role did their faith play? Do miracles really happen? Come and hear for yourself!

BETTER TOGETHER*
Course # B4890 Faculty: Marjorie Schulman
Grade: 9 – 12 Fall 6:55

In this intergenerational program become sensitized to the challenges and strengths of the elderly and what Judaism has to teach us about our relationships with them. Share your life and experiences with seniors and as they share their lives and experiences with you. Through guest speakers and visits to Jewish Senior Services in their new home, develop intergenerational relationships.
*This program is in partnership with the Jewish Senior Services in the new building at 4200 Park Ave. It will also give students a lot of flexibility to earn additional credits and work independently. Better Together can also be designed as an Independent Study.

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?
Course # B4570 Faculty: Laura Pappas
Grade: 9 – 12 Fall 8:00

Consider a variety of contemporary issues that are challenging our society and the world around us. Topics might include: Are there any moral and ethical issues with stem cell research? Is abortion murder? What is the difference between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas? What would a Palestinian state look like? What would Israel look like? What do you think about the same-sex marriage laws passed? What should a millionaire give to charity? Students will be encouraged to discuss the morals, ethics, and legality of issues from a Jewish perspective. In this dynamic class, have fun while learning to clarify, formulate, and articulate your opinions. Seize your opportunity to TAKE A STAND!
J-DATE AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA  
Course # B9201  
Faculty: Marjorie Schulman  
Grade: 11 – 12 ONLY  
Spring 6:55

Times have changed. Isn’t it time Merkaz caught up? Who are you online? How do you present yourself in social media for the world to see? How do you create a profile that is honest, safe, and a reflection of the real you? What are you looking for when you date in college and beyond? How does your being Jewish affect these choices?

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL  
Course # B4080  
Faculty: Carole Rubin  
Grade: 9 – 12  
Spring 6:55

Get “up close and personal” with a different guest each week. This is a unique opportunity to meet with outstanding speakers who will share their journey and its connections to Jewish life. In this interactive course you will reflect upon various issues and aspects of Jewish life, community relations and life-changing events. Discussion topics may include intermarriage, Save the Children, anti-Semitism, organ donation, Jews-by-choice, and interfaith relations among others. These stories are bound to amaze, surprise, move, and impress you!

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE TRAINING  
Course # B3300  
Faculty: Miriam Landa  
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY  
Fall 8:00

Throughout the semester students will learn about various disabilities, appropriate conduct when interacting with individuals with special needs, and the huge impact they can have on others. These skills will be taught through activities and discussions by specialists, parents, and (optional) hands on volunteer time at Friendship Circle events.

ELECTION REFLECTION  
Course # B4320  
Faculty: Doron Kathein  
Grade: 9 – 12  
Fall 6:55 OR Fall 8:00

Compare the American and Israeli election and government systems. How can two democracies function so differently? Examine this year’s political process through a Jewish lens. Apply Jewish values to this current American election process. Pursue questions like does this election have any impact on Israel? Should Jews vote for a candidate just because he is Jewish?
BUILDING A LIVING BRIDGE WITH ISRAELI TEENS
Course # C3100  Faculty: Emissaries
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY  Fall 6:55

Meet our Young Emissaries from Israel and learn about their experiences growing up in our homeland. How does their school time and free time compare with yours? How do Israeli youth prepare themselves for the army, while American teens are preparing for college? Learn about the joys and challenges of being an Israeli teen, the diversity of Israeli society, its history, culture, and accomplishments, and enjoy some hummus and Israeli snacks while you’re there! (May be repeated for credit)

START UP NATION
Course # C3850  Faculty: Doron Kathein
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY  Spring 8:00

“START-UP NATION addresses the trillion dollar question: How is it that Israel-- a country of 7.1 million, only 60 years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources -- produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada and the UK?” As America reboots its own economy and can-do spirit, there’s never been a better time to look at Israel, this remarkable and resilient nation, for some impressive, surprising clues.

FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS JEWS
Course #C4840  Faculty: Laura Pappas
Grade: 9 – 12  Fall 6:55

Thanks to Adam Sandler, we all know who in show business celebrates Hanukkah. But there is a longer list of Jews who qualify for the Hall of Fame or the Hall of Shame. This course will provide an opportunity to learn about infamous Jewish gangsters, and more modern-day crooks. We will contrast them to our Jewish heroes, including Jews who took the movies to new heights, others who won the Nobel Prize, and philanthropists who might send you to Israel for a FREE 10-day trip! Be prepared to be amazed by the breadth of accomplishments and destruction wrought by our kinsmen and to explore why Jewish ethics are more important now than ever!
OUR STORIES
Course # C4260               Faculty: Agnes Vertes
Grade: 9 – 12                 Fall 8:00

Through first person testimony hear real stories of faith, resistance and resilience. Over the years Merkaz students have done story boards of Holocaust survivors in our community. Read their stories out loud, meet those who still survive. Become one of their story tellers because their stories must live on after them. Taught by a faculty member who herself is a Holocaust survivor.

GENEEOLOGY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
Course # C4420               Faculty: Andy Weinstein
Grade: 9 – 12                 Spring 8:00

What do you really know about your grandparents and great grandparents? Your family tree projects from elementary school could use a little landscaping work. What would you really like to know? Ask before it’s too late! How did you meet your spouse? What song did you like to dance to? When did you first vote? Who did you vote for? Did you ever experience anti-Semitism? How did you handle it? Did they serve in the military? What do they remember about the Civil Rights Movement in the US. Start the conversation. Learn about ship manifests and Ellis Island records. Use this course as an excuse to get closer. Bring your phone....you’ll be using it as you research your family history!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ~ COOKING FOR PEACE
Course # C9400               Faculty: Lisa Becker / Dana Aponte
Grade: 12 ONLY                Fall 6:55 AND Fall 8:00

“An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.”

Did you know that behind every recipe there is a story? In this cooking class, learn the stories and recipes of Jews and Palestinians who belong to a Dialogue group that promotes relationship building and peace. They address the ongoing Middle East conflict by learning about one another and sharing their recipes. In this course, you will hear personal accounts, learn about the quest for peace, celebrate the efforts and activities that promote peace, while enjoying the delicious homemade recipes your class prepares. Special guest speakers and film clips will be included, along with thought-provoking discussion and conversation. This is a 2 period class.

CONFIRMATION CLASS FOR CONGREGATION B’NAI ISRAEL
Course # C5000               Faculty: Rabbi James Prosnit
Grade: 10 ONLY                Fall 6:55 AND Spring 8:00

Confirmation class for B’nai Israel students is a 2-semester course.
REAL ENCOUNTERS WITH WORLD RELIGIONS
Course # C4020 Faculty: Laura Pappas
Grade: 9 – 12 Spring 8:00

Peace, respect, and positive relationships begin with knowledge and understanding of one another. This course will provide a comparative view of the world’s major religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Expand and clarify what you already know about Judaism, and compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Judaism and other religions. Gain insight into the history, traditions, and basic tenets of each religion through activities, discussion, and meetings with invited guest speakers from our interfaith community.

HEBREW FOR TRAVEL
Course # C4995 Faculty: Emissaries
Grade: 9 – 12 Spring 6:55

Thinking of traveling to Israel in the future? Take a look at a variety of programs from BBYO and Young Judaeh to Birthright. Learn Hebrew from our Young Emissaries to allow you to function comfortably when you go.

~DIVISION D: ARTS AND LITERATURE~

ART AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL: INSPIRATIONS FROM THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY
Course # D4450 Faculty: Lisa Greenberg
Grade: 9 – 12 Fall 6:55

In this multimedia art workshop you will be creating your own art based on inspirations from the Land of Israel. We will look at the art and artists of both the new and old Israel. Discover how and why the visual arts add to the formulation of a national identity.

NAME THAT TUNE
Course # D4600 Faculty: Justin C. Beck
Grade: 9 – 12 Spring 8:00

Explore the Jewish influence in the music arena. Look at and listen to Jewish composers, musicians, writers and vocalists. The effect is far reaching and includes all kinds of genres including jingles, jazz, classical, Christmas, country, hip-hop, blues, reggae, lullabies, techno, rap, klezmer, and R&B to name a few. The class will include music and film clips, guest performers and sing a long (if you want).
A CHILD’S STORY
Course #: D4825 Faculty: Laura Pappas
Grade: 9 – 12 Spring 6:55

Jewish picture books and other short works based on folk tales, midrashim, and Hassidic stories are worth reading as an adult. Using your creative skills and lots of discussion, we will explore some of the many meanings and lessons of the texts and illustrations. Find out about PJ Library and the revolution in Jewish children’s books. Try your hand at writing or illustrating one. A valuable course for babysitters, camp counselors, etc.

A TASTE OF JEWISH COOKING
Course #: D9360 Faculty: Lisa Becker / Dana Aponte
Grade: 11 - 12 ONLY Spring 6:55 OR Spring 8:00

Having lived all over the world, Jews are the originators of “Fusion” cooking, a style that reflects the combination of many different cultures. In addition to many time-honored Ashkenazi favorites, students will have an opportunity to try their hands at some traditional and non-traditional recipes from Sephardic and Middle Eastern to North African dishes. Learn what holiday favorites are enjoyed by Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. The course also includes an examination of the laws of Kashrut. And best of all, you’ll have the opportunity to eat what you cook!

50 JEWISH ARTISTS YOU SHOULD KNOW
Course #: D4590 Faculty: Lisa Greenberg
Grade: 9 – 12 Spring 6:55

Discuss and emulate the artwork of famous Jewish artists you may know like Chagall, Rothko, and Modigliani. How about others you may not have heard of like Spero, Karavan, Naaman and Louis. Create your own original works using a variety of art media: paint, soft pastels, india ink, water color, and more. Be inspired and create!

PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH A JEWISH LENS
Course #: D4815 Faculty: Regina Madwed
Grade: 9 – 12 Fall 8:00

Look at Jewish ritual objects, Jewish communal life and education and Jewish food in a way like never before. Using a camera, get up close and personal. Zoom in and zoom out. It’s a whole new way of looking at things. Bring your camera or use your phone!
CHOICES YOU WILL FACE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS (Senior Seminar)
Course # R1134 Faculty: Rabbi Colin Brodie
Grade: 12 ONLY Fall 8:00 OR Spring 8:00

What does it mean to be a responsible Jew? What are the guiding principles for making responsible choices and taking responsible actions? As you prepare to go off to college, this course will help you clarify your beliefs, examine various social and political perspectives, and explore issues of diversity and choices on the college campus. Participate in dynamic discussions and activities that will help prepare you for a “response-able” future.

Be A Part Of It!