



2018 – 2019

**Course
Catalog**

V 2 – 4/24/18



~COURSE DIVISIONS~

DIVISION A: TEXT AND THOUGHT

DIVISION B: CONTEMPORARY TOPICS

DIVISION C: HISTORY AND SOCIETY

DIVISION D: THE ARTS AND LITERATURE

DIVISION R: SENIOR SEMINAR

PLEASE NOTE:

- 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 semester and time 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.

~FALL COURSES 6:55pm~

IN SEARCH FOR ISRAELI CUISINE

Course # C9600
Grade: 11-12 ONLY

Faculty: Lisa Becker / Lisa Snow
Fall 6:55 AND Fall 8:00 – 2 Period Class

New!

In Search of Israeli Cuisine is a portrait of the Israeli people told through food. Profiling chefs, home cooks, farmers, vintners, and cheese makers drawn from the more than 100 cultures that make up Israel today--Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian, Druze a rich, complex and human story emerges. Learn about Israeli Cuisine as you cook and schmooze with the two Lisas.

**You must be prepared to taste some unusual foods .*

BETTER TOGETHER*

Course # B4890
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Marjorie Schulman
Fall 6:55 AND Spring 6:55

**Back By
Popular Demand!**

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. May count as community service hours.

**This program is in partnership with the Jewish Senior Services at 4200 Park Ave.*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ISRAEL!

Course # C4001
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Emissaries
Fall 6:55

New!

Israel is 70 years old! Get an overview of the personalities and events that have shaped these 70 years. Join our emissaries as they get settled in.

SUPERHEROES – AN INTRODUCTION

Course # A4011
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin
Fall 6:55

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.

YOGA AND JEWISH MEDITATION

Course # B4012

Grade: 9 - 12

Faculty: Niema Hirsch

Fall 6:55 OR Spring 6:55

**A Student
Favorite!**

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.

May be taken for repeat credit.

MORALITY FOR MUGGLES

Course #D3400

Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY

Faculty: Susan Roth

Fall 6:55

Are you a Harry Potter fan or do you like to debate life's biggest issues? Either way, this course is for you. Talk about friendship, rule breaking, repentance, free choice and prophecy. These and other hot topics will be discussed as we look at the Jewish values in Harry Potter.

JEWISH JOURNALISM ~ What Is Real And What Is Fake News? How Can You Tell The Difference?

Course # B7020

Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY

Faculty: Ricka Breiner

Fall 6:55

New!

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.

BIO ETHICS AND OTHER DILEMMAS I

Course # B3800

Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY

Faculty: Rabbi Marcelo Kormis

Fall 6:55

Today we are confronted with so many complex choices and viewpoints. Our rapidly changing world is often full of contradictions. What do our Jewish traditions, texts, and philosophers have to say about these issues? We'll explore such topics as school violence and bullying, animal experimentation, assisted suicide, the ethics of war, sexuality, and substance abuse. Through lively discussions, debate, and interactive activities, this course will enable participants to challenge their own beliefs, clarify their values, and become more informed decision-makers.

CONFIRMATION CLASS FOR CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

Course # AC5000

Grade: 10 ONLY

Faculty: Rabbi James Prosnit

Fall 6:55 AND Spring 8:00

Confirmation class for B'nai Israel students is a 2-semester course.

SABA, SAVTA AND ME

Course # B4330

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Danielle Schwartz

Fall 6:55

New!

Merkaz's favorite "Savtas" (grandmas) and Saba's (grandpas) along with Danielle Schwartz, will converse weekly about issues they all face. Join in the conversations about dating, aging, family pressures, school and other topics you choose. Hear different generational perspectives about Israel, Jewish life and love. Imagine sitting around the kitchen table and chatting away with old friends.

~FALL COURSES 8:00pm~

ISRAELI 101

Course #C3700

Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY

Faculty: Emissaries

Fall 8:00

New!

Meet our young Emissaries from Israel and learn about their experiences growing up in our homeland as they share their lives, activities, stories and their love for their home.

ARK-ITECHT

Course # A3850

Grade: 9 – 11

Faculty: Justin C. Beck

Fall 8:00

New!

What is and was the 2nd Temple? Why is the western Wall holy. How was this massive building built? What was life like during this time and how did the Jews survive? Answer all these questions then build a replica of the Temple. Using legos learn about scale, cubits, and other measurements. Try your hand at building your ideal synagogue, sukkah and other Jewish structures. Find out where their instructions come from.

ON LIVING, DEATH & DYING

Course # B7120

Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY

Faculty: Marjorie Schulman

Fall 8:00

**Back By
Popular Demand!**

Explore the important connections between life and death and how they can influence the way you choose to live your life. Identify what is really important to you and recognize how to achieve your dreams. Students will examine issues related to death and dying – life cycle events not often discussed in social situations. How can our morality influence our relationships, values and goals? Explore your own views through discussions and a variety of experiential activities

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE TRAINING

Course # B3300
Grade: 9 – 11 ONLY

Faculty: Miriam Landa
Fall 8:00

Throughout the semester students will learn from guest speakers 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.

ACTIVISM & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Course # B4150
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: TBD
Fall 8:00

New!

Important both historically and today, activism and social justice are vehicles for change. They give voice to the individual. Learn how Jews have been instrumental in social justice movements like suffrage, civil rights, anti-war, gun control, the women's movement and many others. Develop your own activism and organization skills. Find out what you care about passionately.

THE JEWISH TWILIGHT ZONE

Course # A4581
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin
Fall 8:00

"Ordinary people find themselves in extraordinary situations which they try to solve in a remarkable manner". This popular TV series aired from 1959-1964. These tales of the supernatural are often tinged with social commentary. Watch this vintage TV series with our film maven Rabbi Rubin.

KRAV MAGA

Course # D4350
Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: TBD
Fall 8:00

New!

The official self defense and combat system of the IDF and Israeli security forces Shin Bet and Mossad. Derived from a combination of boxing, wrestling, aikido, judo and karate, and realistic fight training Krav Maga is known for its focus on real-world situations and its extreme efficiency. Learn some Hebrew as you work out.

HANDS ON JUDAISM

Course # D4650

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: TBD

Fall 8:00

New!

Create Jewish art by incorporating Jewish themes and using numerous art forms and different materials. No previous experience necessary. Come unleash and explore your creative side in this “hands-on” class!

VIEWING THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH FILM

Course # D4750

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Agnes Vertes

Fall 8:00

New!

Learn about the Holocaust including the rise of anti-Semitism, Jewish ghettos, the *Kindertransport*, resistance, the death camps, rescue, the aftermath, and remembrance. Students will have an opportunity to view numerous film clips on each of these topics, engage in dynamic conversations, and discuss the relevance of this part of our history in our lives today.

BIKE REPAIR THE WORLD

Course # B4835

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Alan Feldman

Fall 8:00

New!

Repair the world one bike at a time! Learn the art of bike repair. Get greasy! Ride for a Cause or causes. Research organizations to help you distribute bikes to kids in need. Talk about *tikkun olam* and what it means to you.

CHOICES YOU WILL FACE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS (REQUIRED FOR SENIORS)

Course # R1134

Grade: 12 ONLY

Faculty: Rabbi Colin Brodie

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. We will also discuss how to handle BDS, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism should you encounter any of these issues.

New!

JEWISH TABOO

Course # A4460

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Ricka Breiner

Spring 6:55

Do you have a Jewish question you always wanted to ask? Are you curious about what Judaism has to say about a variety of issues. What do you know about other movements in Judaism beyond your own. Are we really different?

BETTER TOGETHER*

Course # B4890

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Marjorie Schulman

Fall 6:55 AND Spring 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 at 4200 Park Ave. It will also give students a lot of flexibility to earn additional credits and work independently.

MEDICAL ETHICS

Course #B4480

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Rabbi Marcelo Kormis

Spring 6:55

From birth to death and in between, doctors, nurses and caregivers make decisions that require not just medical knowledge, but ethics and values as well. A variety of guest speakers will present issues you can grapple with like abortion or assisted suicide.

SOUL FOOD

Course #C7710

Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY

Faculty: Lisa Becker

Spring 6:55

New!

So much of our lives revolve around food. For years Lisa Becker has been teaching interesting cooking classes at Merkaz. In this class, join us on a journey about feeding our soul not just our stomach. Sure to be interesting, as Lisa Becker delves into issues like GMO and biotech foods. Look at the Birkat Hamazon, the blessing after meals. Does God really provide enough food for everyone not to go hungry? Of course there will also be some kitchen time!

HANDS ON JUDAISM

Course #D4650

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: TBD

Spring 6:55

New!

Create Jewish art by incorporating Jewish themes and using numerous art forms. No previous experience necessary. Come unleash and explore your creative side in this “hands-on” class!

YOGA AND JEWISH MEDITATION

Course # B4012

Grade: 9-12

Faculty: Niema Hirsch

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.

May be taken for repeat credit.

SUPERHEROES – THE SAGA CONTINUES

Course # A4550

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin

Spring 6:55

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

JEWS ROCK

Course # D4595

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Andy Weinstein

Spring 6:55

New!

A history of the Jews in *Rock & Roll* in both story and multimedia. Who knew how much influence Jews had on the rock and roll culture! From lyricists to musicians, radio hosts to record producers, join us on a musical journey.

JEWISH HUMOR

Course # C4520

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: TBD

Spring 6:55

New!

Jewish Humor stand up, one-liners, the Borscht Belt all have a place in the wide range of Jewish Humor. As a people we have always laughed at ourselves and our situations. Even during the Holocaust, Jews used humor to survive.

JEWS AND GENDER

Course # B7550

Grade: 10– 12 ONLY

Faculty: Ira Wise
Spring 6:55

New!

LGBTQ+ is a 21st century acronym that expresses identities that have been around for millennia. The difference is that in today's world we should be able to fully be who we are in public. Can a faith tradition that dates its beginnings over 3,800 years ago handle that? Can we have discussions that are authentically Jewish that are also inclusive and welcoming to all? Yes!

2,100 years ago, Rabbi Hillel asked "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" The answer is NOW. This class is open to all who would like to explore and discuss gender issues in a responsible safe place.

~SPRING COURSES 8:00pm~

GENEALOGY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Course # C4420

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Andy Weinstein
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! Start the conversation. Use this course as an excuse to get closer. Learn about ship manifests and Ellis Island records. Bring your phone or tablet....you'll be using it as you research your family history!

THE JEWISH TWILIGHT ZONE

Course # A4581

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Rabbi Chagie Rubin
Spring 8:00

"Ordinary people find themselves in extraordinary situations which they try to solve in a remarkable manner". This popular TV series aired from 1959-1964. These tales of the supernatural are often tinged with social commentary.

1ST AND 2ND GENERATION

Course # C4875

Grade: 9 – 12

Faculty: Agnes Vertes

Spring 8:00

New!

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, along with their children and learn how being a child of a survivors helped shapes the lives of the 2nd generation.

CONFIRMATION CLASS FOR CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

Course # C5000

Grade: 10 ONLY

Faculty: Rabbi James Prosnit

Fall 6:55 AND Spring 8:00

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COLLEGE BOUND FOR JUNIORS

Course # B8260

Grade: 11 ONLY

Faculty: Sheryl Santiago

Spring 8:00

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!

ISRAELI 101

Course # C7450

Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY

Faculty: Emissaries

Spring 8:00

New!

Meet our young Emissaries from Israel and learn about their experiences growing up in our homeland as they share their lives, activities, stories and their love for their home.

BIBLE THEATER

Course # C7300

Grade: 10 – 12 ONLY

Faculty: Lisa Becker

Spring 8:00

New!

Did you play Noah in Nursery School – or were you relegated to the ark as an animal? Study the stories of Genesis, the morals, ethics, and issues presented to our forefathers and mothers, and using improv reenact these famous scenes from the Bible. Are these stories or are they predictors of human behavior. Perhaps your Noah will make a different decision. What might have happened?

THE JOY OF ISRAELI AND JEWISH FOLK DANCE

Course # A4690

Faculty: Rayhan Pasternak

Grade: 9 – 12

Spring 8:00

Dance is a wonderful component of any ethnic culture! Throughout Jewish history dancing as a cultural expression was at times “upstaged” by vocal and instrumental music. Jewish folk dancing goes as far back as ancient Israel and through the centuries of the Diaspora. With the birth of the State of Israel, dancing once again regained its popularity and prominence. Explore our Jewish heritage while having a great time learning a variety of dances.

KABBALAH: A JEWISH SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Course # A4710

Faculty: Justin C. Beck

Grade: 9 – 12

Spring 8:00

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.

CHOICES YOU WILL FACE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS (REQUIRED FOR SENIORS)

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. We will also discuss how to handle BDS, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism should you encounter any of these issues.