



Judaic Studies
Curriculum Overview
2018-19

Continuing Skills Initiative

Here at MDY, it's not only about *what* our students learn, but *how* they learn. We are driven towards imparting to our students the tools and abilities necessary to become lifelong learners. With that in mind, MDYHS has a Judaic Studies curriculum with specific educational goals that cultivate students' learning skills.

For each discipline within Judaic Studies, a master skills list was created, highlighting a progression of abilities and skills that students are taught as they make their way from 9th-12th grade. The outlined skills are level specific, ensuring that each child is taught according to their needs and capabilities.

This model was created as a means toward reaching the following goals:

1. Equipping our students with textual skills which will enable them to become ***independent learners*** in all subject areas.
2. For teachers and students alike to have a clear vision and focus of defined educational objectives, to be met at every grade level, i.e. "This is what I should expect to have the ability to do by the end of this year".
3. Meeting graduating standards from year to year. This assures a clear progression and growth rate in the proficiencies of every student. ***Every year will build on the previous one.***

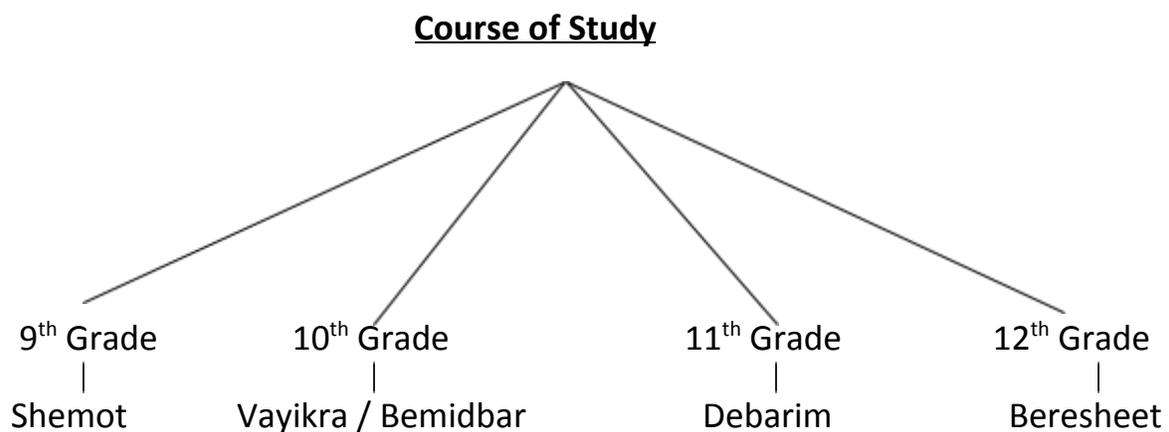
Of course, our Judaic Studies curriculum is content driven, with curriculum maps, assessments and methodologies laid out for teachers, all the while, allowing for teacher initiative, new ideas and differentiated instruction. Below you will find a basic outline of our curriculum for each discipline, with skills goals.

Torah

Description: A skills based curriculum, covering all five books of *Humash* over a 4 year course of study.

Objectives: Students will:

- Develop an in depth understanding of numerous narratives and *misvot* in each book of *Humash*, based on the text, classical commentaries and Midrashic literature, within select units of study.
- Learn to **analyze** the nuances of Torah text, through which they will identify appropriate questions and appreciate the methods in which answers may be extracted from the language of our holy Torah.
- Be able to **navigate** through the broader context of *Humash* and compare or contrast different texts.
- Be equipped to search and identify appropriate commentaries on a given verse and develop an appreciation of their unique styles.
- Become **independent** Torah learners.

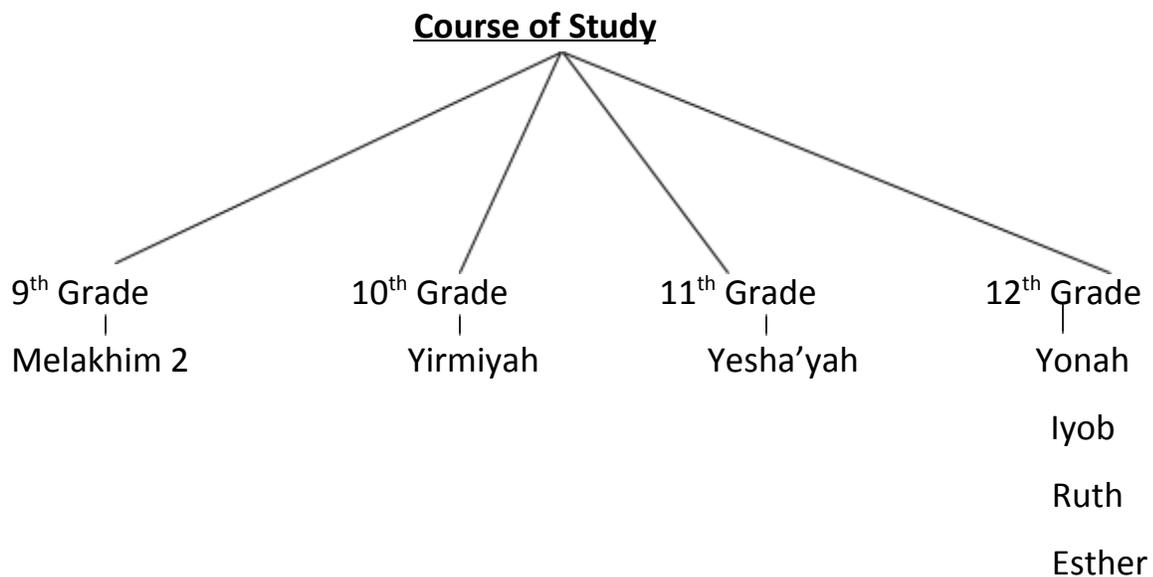


Navi

Description: A skills based curriculum, covering various books in Early & Later Prophets (*Nebe'im*), as well as Scriptures (*Ketubim*).

Objectives: Students will:

- Understand the depth of the Prophet's message, through textual analysis and study of a range of commentaries.
- Develop a sensitivity to the time frame of each book to support their understanding of the historical setting of the prophecies.
- Learn to recognize the uniqueness of each Prophet's theme and literary style.
- Appreciate the relevance of the Prophet's message to their daily lives.

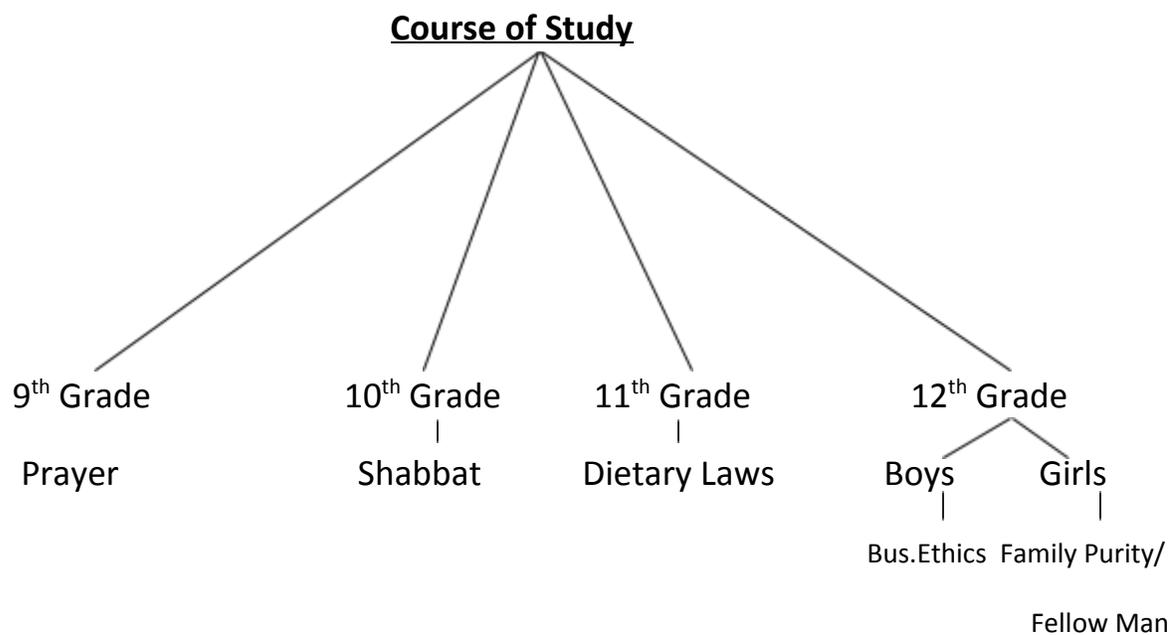


Halakhah

Description: A well-diversified curriculum of numerous topics of Jewish law, based on Sephardic / Syrian traditions.

Objectives: Students will:

- Attain a thorough knowledge of the laws pertaining to their everyday Jewish lives, including prayer, Shabbat, dietary laws, business ethics, family purity, and interpersonal relationships.
- Develop a comfort level of utilizing classical halakhic texts, allowing them to **navigate** through them in order to search and identify specific laws, including *Shulhan Arukh*, *Mishnah Berurah*, and the modern day works of Hakham Obadia Yosef.
- Be trained in **applying** the laws to practical, real life cases.
- Gain an appreciation of the development of halakhah through its original sources, including Talmud, Rambam and Bet Yosef.



Hebrew Language and Literature

Description: A newly revised curriculum designed to reinforce and cultivate the Hebrew language skills of our students, including reading, oral expression, reading comprehension, and writing.

Objectives: Students will:

- Strengthen their usage and **comprehension** of the Hebrew language, enabling them to apply this proficiency to all other areas of Judaic studies.
- Improve their ability to **converse** in the Hebrew language.
- Build upon their Hebrew **writing** skills, through a number of different learning modalities.
- Gain a familiarity and appreciation of ancient Sephardic texts, much of which can be found in their traditional prayers and liturgy.
- Develop a strong connection with the **Land of Israel**, its people and its current events, through various writing and reading projects.

The course of study for Hebrew Language and Literature includes a focus on the following aspects:

- Audio Comprehension
- Reading
- Reading Comprehension
- Oral Expression
- Written expression

The level of challenge for each aspect of the curriculum is raised, as students move from 9th to 12th grade. As an example, for reading comprehension, students may begin with short stories, then long stories, then newspaper articles, and finally poetry and advanced poetry. The 12th grade curriculum also includes preparation for the Yerushalmi exam, which can grant students credits towards college.

Talmud

Description: A completely skills based curriculum, in which Talmud (*Gemara*), is studied intensely by all male students, during a 10 period weekly time block.

Objective: Students will acquire all the necessary skills to enable them to learn Talmud independently, according to our traditional, analytical approach.

Areas of Focus:

1. Reading & pronunciation
2. Vocabulary
3. Comprehension
4. Punctuation & Structure
5. Critical thinking and analysis
6. Methodology for *Rashi* and *Tosafot* analysis

Course of Study: All grades study the same tractate of Gemara, allowing for conversations and discussions amongst students and teachers. The learning of one tractate also allows for a unifying factor in the school, as at year's end, we celebrate the completion of our learning together with a beautiful siyum, Gemara awards, and words of inspiration from various rabbis on staff.

This year's *masekhet* (tractate): Sanhedrin (chapters 3 and 8)

Jewish Philosophy

Description: A two year curriculum, covering numerous critical topics and concepts of Jewish thought, which form the underpinnings of the basic faith of a Jew.

Objectives: Students will:

- Gain a deep understanding of the basic tenets of Judaism.
- Develop a love and appreciation for G-d, the Jewish nation, and themselves.
- Be capable of applying their knowledge of Judaism to their everyday lives.
- Learn to critically analyze texts of both medieval and contemporary commentators.
- Become sufficiently equipped with the ability to express their opinion in a properly developed argument.

For 12th grade students, MDYHS uses a brand new curriculum on Science & Torah, created by the famed Jewish scientist, Professor Nathan Aviezer.

