



מדרשת תורה ועבודה
MIDRESHET TORAH V'AVODAH

Course Catalog 5780/2019-20

Midreshet Torah V'Avodah, a program for highly motivated high school graduates, is the first seminary to offer a truly integrated post high school year experience. MTVA's innovative model allows you to expand and broaden every aspect of who you are through the lens of Torat Eretz Yisrael.

Midreshet Torah V'Avodah is proud to offer six different areas of study, with courses and levels to suit each student's interests and needs. The classes are taught by world renowned Torah scholars, who are eager to impart their knowledge and skills upon our students.

Below are the courses being offered for the 5780/2019-20 academic year. Note that courses beginning with odd numbers connote first semester courses, those beginning with an even numbers are offered during the second semester. We will be placing you initially in Gemara, Isha V'Hamitzvot, and Mashgicha Roundtables during the first week of the semester.

Please also note that all Gemara shiurim will be learning Masechet Gittin.

You will have the opportunity to "shop" different classes at the beginning of each semester.

Important: At Midreshet Torah V'Avodah we feel that it is crucial to develop independent learning skills with a chavruta in the Beit Midrash as well as learning in a classroom setting. Our hope is for you to be able to learn the subjects you prefer as well as to gain the skills that will allow you to continue independent study of Torah texts in the future. Therefore, we encourage you to NOT take classes for every time slot, but rather register for at least one or two Beit Midrash slots. We can help pair you with a peer or staff member to learn the text of your choice. You are required to take Halacha, Isha V'hamitzvot, and Gemara (including Shiur Klali). All other time slots are open to Chavruta or classroom study.

תנ"ך – Department of Bible

BIB 101/ 201: Shivat Tzion / Return to Zion

Avigail Unterberg

Thursday 16:00-17:00

2 credits

We will explore the texts surrounding shivat tzion and the early years of the Second Beit Hamikdash. Through an in depth study of these biblical texts we will uncover messages from the neviim that are as relevant today as they ever were.

BIB 103/203: Neviim Rishonim / The First Prophets

Sarina Novick

Wednesday 9:00-10:15

2 credits

This course focuses on textual study of Neviim Rishonim, and the progression of leadership starting from the time of conquering Eretz Yisrael under Yehoshua. We will discuss how the stories recorded relate to overall themes in Neviim Rishonim, and the significance of parallels throughout Tanakh that enlighten and provide context for why and how these stories were written. This course will be one that encourages student participation and critical thinking, using the text and commentaries as a guide.

BIB 112/212: Parshat HaShavua (Hebrew) / Advanced Weekly Bible Portion

Hadar Yaday

Thursday 14:45-15:45

1 credit

Each week we will delve into a textual and thematic study of the weekly Torah portion. This course will give you the skills to learn the parsha on your own, so you will never again have to worry about showing up at the Shabbat table without a dvar Torah in hand! The class will be in Hebrew and will help you develop your language skills as well.

BIB 113/213: Parshat HaShavua (English) / Understanding the Weekly Bible Portion

Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Seif

Thursday 14:45-15:45

1 credit

Each week we will delve into a textual and thematic study of the weekly Torah portion with particular focus on developing methodology in the study of Torah. This course will give you the skills to learn the parsha on your own, so you will never again have to worry about showing up at the Shabbat table without a dvar Torah in hand!

BIB 302/402: Human Nature in Bereishit / Genesis

Sara Tesler

Wednesday 10:30-11:45

2 credits

In this course we will conduct an in-depth study of several of the central events, personalities and motifs in Sefer Bereishit. We will accomplish this through textual study and the exploration of classical and modern commentary.

BIB 303/403: Book of Yechezkel/ Ezekiel**Rabbanit Shani Taragin****Wednesday 12:00-13:00****2 credits**

Personalities, backgrounds, and styles of *nevuah* will be explored as we are introduced to one of the most dynamic and extraordinary *neviim* of all time. As a "mute"-*navi* living in the Diaspora amidst a population shocked by their new political and geographical setting, Yechezkel has to deliver strong messages to his audience, convincing them of *churban* and preparing them for renewal and rebuilding. We will learn his chronologically arranged prophecies through a textual, historical, and religious perspective employing classical and modern *parshanut* as his messages come to life for us today.

BIB 313/413: Chamesh Megilot / Minor Biblical Books**Rabbanit Shani Taragin****Sunday 16:30-18:00****Wednesday 16:30-18:00****3 credits**

These shiurim will provide an introduction to the world of Ketuvim while focusing on skills of textual analysis and sensitivity to various genres. We will explore the presentation of philosophical outlooks of existentialism in Kohelet, historical satire in Megillat Esther, and the poetry of love in Shir HaShirim. Students will gain a newfound appreciation of familiar and less familiar works as we engage in comparative study of texts (e.g. Ruth-Shoftim, Eichah-Yirmiyahu) to understand and incorporate their respective messages in our lives.

BIB 315/415: Making Sense of Biblical Dichotomies and Simultaneous Truths (Matan)**Rabbanit Yael Leibowitz****Wednesday 10:30-11:45****2 credits**

Tanakh, as a corpus of works, contains within it many seemingly contradictory outlooks. Differences in ideology, theology, notions of leadership and visions for a robust society manifest on almost every page. Through an in-depth exploration of narrative, legal and prophetic texts, this course will address seemingly-contradictory opinions and voices in Tanakh. In doing so, develop an appreciation for a uniquely Biblical worldview.

BIB 316 Creation, Un-Creation, and Re-Creation: Bereishit 1-11 (Matan)**Dr. Yael Ziegler****Wednesday 9-10:15****2 credits**

Bereishit 1-11 offers an account of humankind's beginning. What do these chapters teach us about the Torah's view of the cosmic order, the purpose of humans, the nature of a failed society, and the relationships between

God and humans, man and woman, and brothers? We will employ midrashim, medieval parshanut, and literary tools in an attempt to mine these rudimentary and profound chapters for their lofty and universal messages.

BIB 324/424: Books of Yehoshua and Shoftim/ Joshua and Judges (Matan-Hebrew)

Dr. Yael Ziegler (Semester 1--Yehoshua), Chaviva Shpeter (Semester 2--Shoftim)

Wednesday 10:35-11:45

2 credits

נלמד את ספר יהושע בסמסטר הראשון (עם יעל ציגלר) וספר שופטים בסמסטר השני (עם חביבה שפטר). נתחיל מהכניסה לארץ - כיבושה והתנחלותה - ונראה את אתגרי הדור השני. נעמיק בלימוד הנהגתו של יהושע והשופטים שקמו לישראל.

BIB 330/430: Advanced Torah Seminar

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

Tuesday 8:30-11:30

3 credits

Rabbi Leibtag's pioneering approach to Tanach is world renowned and has revolutionized Tanach education. This intensive seminar is your chance to learn from the master himself! You will also learn the skills to reproduce his methodology on your own through guided chavruta time during this slot.

BIB 333 Parshanut Hamikra (Matan-Hebrew) / Understanding Biblical Text in Hebrew

Rivka Basch

Monday 9:00-10:15

1 credit

בקורס ננסה לרדת לעומקו של מקרא על ידי קריאה צמודה של הפסוקים תוך עיון בפרשנים. ננסה לגלות את המיוחד והאופייני לכל פרשן על ידי השוואת פירושיהם והתבוננות בסביבה בה הם יצרו וכתבו את פירושיהם. בבחירת הקטעים נשתדל לעקוב אחרי לוח השנה ופרשות השבוע. נכיר פירוש לתורה פחות מוכר [של ר' אברהם בן הרמב"ם] ונתמקד במספר נושאים בפירושו של הרלב"ג לתורה כמו מתן טעמי מצוות בהשוואה לפרשנים אחרים.

BIB 334 Insights into the Haftara (Matan-Hebrew)

Ilana Hadad

Wednesday 12:00-13:00

1 credit

במהלך הקורס נלמד לעומק את הפטרות השבוע. ננסה להציע פרשנות מחודשת הן להפטרה והן לפרשה בעקבות הקשר שביניהן.

BIB 3901/4901: Survey: Bible

Staff

1 credit

Survey of important topics in Bible literature with a highlight on group learning with a focus on the dynamics and interplay of various topics in the Bible.

BM 101 Beit Midrash Torah V'Avodah**Rabbi Bayer, Sarina Novick, Avigayil Unterberg****1 credit**

Beit Midrash Torah V'Avodah contextualizes and connects the learning that takes place beyond the walls of TVA's Beit Midrash to our learning experience within the Beit Midrash. In this course, we will grapple with the spiritual ideal and reality of national life in Israel, and will challenge ourselves to reflect personally on texts related to leadership trips, shabbatonim, and tiyulim. We will consider how each of these experiences during the year shape our broader religious lives.

Department of Jewish History – היסטוריה

JHIS 102/202: Inside Zionism: From Text to Today**Rabbi Alan Goldman****Monday 4:30-6:00****2 credits**

This course has four essential aspects:

- Zionist Ideas
- Understanding the Arab – Israeli conflict
- The fundamentals of effective activism
- Leadership development & personal growth

Goals and Objectives

The goals of this course are threefold: To provide the students with a greater knowledge and understanding of modern Israel and the role of Zionist thought, to encourage each student to develop his/her own Zionist ideology and to develop the skills necessary to articulate that ideology. To that end, a significant emphasis will be placed on developing the student's individual leadership potential. A focus will be placed on empowering students to view themselves as participants in Jewish history, with the ability to make a meaningful impact on the world. This course will put emphasis on learning the intellectual history of Zionist thinkers through their writings.

JHIS 103/203: Zionism is Activism: A Hands on Approach**Rabbi Michael Unterberg****Monday 4:30-6:00****1.5 credits**

This course has four essential aspects:

- Zionist Ideas
- Understanding the Arab – Israeli conflict
- The fundamentals of effective activism
- Leadership development & personal growth

Goals and Objectives

The goals of this course are threefold: To provide the students with a greater knowledge and understanding of modern Israel and the role of Zionist thought, to encourage each student to develop his/her own Zionist ideology and to develop the skills necessary to articulate that ideology. To that end, a significant emphasis will be placed on developing the student's individual leadership potential. A focus will be placed on empowering students to view themselves as participants in Jewish history, with the ability to make a meaningful impact on the world. This course will focus particularly on developing activism skills to take with you on college campuses or other forums.

Department of Jewish Law - הלכה

JLW 101-104/ 201-204: Ha'Isha V'ha'Mitzvot / Women and Jewish Law

Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Rabbanit Nechama Goldman Barash, Dr. Tamara Spitz, Rabbanit Michal Jacob

Sunday 14:45-16:00

2 credits

This shiur will focus on the development of Jewish Law particularly as it pertains to women. In addition to in depth study of texts, we will explore and discuss applications of these laws in modern Jewish society.

JLW 105/205: Hilkhote Shabbat / Laws of the Sabbath

Rabbanit Navit Tzadik

Sunday 9:20-10:20

Thursday 9:00-9:55

2 credits

Shabbat is an integral part of our Yahadut, and its study is crucial for acquiring a clear understanding and appreciation of Hilchot Shabbat.

This course will be a survey that moves quickly across a broad range of Hilchot Shabbat, intended to familiarize students with the central issues of each melacha/mitzvah, together with the most relevant practical applications.

JLW 106/ 206: Hilchot Kashrut / Jewish Dietary Laws

Rabbi Aaron Bayer

Sunday 10:25-11:30

Thursday 10:00-10:55

2 credits

This course aims to equip the students with a working knowledge of Hilchot Kashrut so that they will be prepared to keep their own kosher kitchens as they embark on their independent lives this year, in college and beyond. It will be a source-based class that will explore the development of the halacha from the Gemara through the Rishonim through to psak halacha, but will always have an eye toward reaching bottom-line conclusions to enable the students to implement on a practical level what we are learning -- and to keep kosher kitchens with confidence!

JLW 301/401: In-Depth Halacha: Shabbat and Kashrut / In Depth Jewish Law: Sabbath and Dietary Law

Rabbi David Brofsky

Sunday 9:20-11:30

Thursday 9:00-10:55

4 credit

An in-depth study of the practical halachot of Shabbat and Kashrut using classical texts as the basis.

JLW 303/403: Behind the Scenes of the Halachic Process

Rabbanit Navit Tzadik

Sunday 11:45-13:00

1.5 credits

In this halacha class we will broaden and deepen our understanding on the halachik process through meta halachik questions. We will learn the sources on each topic to give us a better understanding of the way halacha works. Why are there so many halachik disputes and how does one know which rabbi to go by? How does a Posek decide on a halachik psak and are we allowed to ask more than one posek a halachik ruling? How flexible is halacha? Why and when would the halachik ruling change according to specific circumstances? How much emphasis do we put on customs? Do we have to pray according to a certain nusach? What happens when couples who get married come from different customs? When does halacha change according to what the nation is already doing? Does halacha change according to modern science? Is halacha moral? How do we deal with halacha that seems to contradict our modern moral values? The aim of this course is to help us deepen our understanding of the halachik process.

JLW 305/405: Contemporary Halachic Issues / Contemporary Jewish Law

Rabbanit Michal Jacob

Tuesday 10:15-11:20

1.5 credits

Did you know that machine matzahs almost weren't kosher? What problems did the earliest Jews in Brazil face during shemoneh esrei? How do modern farmers manage to keep shemittah? In Contemporary Halachic Issues we'll discuss these topics and more, as we discover how halacha responds to changes in society and the Jewish experience.

Department of Jewish Philosophy מחשבת ישראל

JPH 101/201: Philosophy of Modern Orthodoxy

Rabbi Aaron Wexler

Sunday 11:45-13:00

1 credit

Being an Orthodox Jew in the 21st Century is not always simple. We will study various philosophies regarding how Orthodox Jews should interact with modern society.

JPH 102/202: Chassidut / Hassidic Philosophy

Rabbi Yehudah Katz

Monday 2:45-4:05

2 credits

We will study the Hasidic movement from its founding by the Baal Shem Tov to today. We will examine the theologies and practices and how they evolved throughout the generations.

JPH 103/203: Structure and Meaning of Prayer

Dr. Tamara Spitz

Tuesday 9-10:10

2 credits

How can we make our tefillah more meaningful and inspirational? This course will focus on understanding the deeper meaning of the language and structure of Shmonah Esrei.

Please bring a Siddur to class.

JPH 104/204: Philosophy of Rav Soloveitchik

Rabbi Aaron Bayer

Wednesday 16:30-18:00

2 credits

A look at the philosophies, ideologies and intellect of Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik zatz"al.

JPH 105/205: Spiritual Revolution of Rav Kook

Rabbi Ari Schwartz

Wednesday 9:00-10:15

1.5 credits

Unfortunately, for most of the English-speaking world, Rav Kook (1865-1935) has become one of those cliché thinkers that many people talk about, but very few have actually learnt and become inspired from the inside out. This course is an in-depth study of Rav Kook's writings, who spearheaded religious Zionism. We will study his philosophy of individuality, teshuva (spiritual growth), Torah, Zionism, atheism vs. faith, vegetarianism, and geulah (universal redemption).

JPH 107/ 207: Big Ideas of Jewish Thought

Rabbi Dr. David Harbater

Wednesday 12:00-13:00

1 credits

Judaism rests upon a series of core beliefs: that there is a God, that He has a relationship with mankind, that He expressed His will in mitzvot and that the Jews are His chosen people. Over the years these beliefs and their foundations have been understood and interpreted in a variety of ways. The course will provide students an opportunity and a safe space to study and discuss these beliefs and their interpretations, and to reflect upon their

relevance today. In addition to key sections from the Tanakh and Chazal, we will examine and explore the writings of some of the giants of Jewish thought including Rambam, Halevy, R. Soloveitchik, R. Kook, Hirsch and Heschel

JPH 108/208: Uncovering the Spiritual Meaning of Shabbat

Rabbi Ari Schwartz

Thursday 16:00-17:00

1 credits

If a non-religious person would ask a religious person, “What is Shabbat?” many religious people would answer, “A day where you cannot turn on and off lights, cook, use your phone, and travel in a car.” In other words: **a day of restrictions**. Yet according to Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah, all the laws of Shabbat are spiritual tools that help a person experience the power of Shabbat. It is not a day of restrictions, but a day of celebration. In this course, we will study many Jewish sources that explain the meaning behind the many laws of Shabbat. This course will focus less on analyzing the laws, and more on uncovering the meaning of the laws.

Topics focused on in the course include: What is the spiritual purpose of Shabbat? Why are there so many restrictions and laws? What are the reasons behind the many Shabbat customs? The deeper relationship between the week and Shabbat.

JPH 109/209: Faith and Doubt

Rabbi Alan Haber

Thursday 14:45-15:45

1 credits

Do I believe God gave the Torah, word for word, on Mt Sinai? Do I believe God watches over and monitors all of my actions? Do I believe in the Mashiach? What is all of this supposed to mean anyway? In this course we will study the texts that lay out the Thirteen Principles of Faith - the standard definition of what Torah Jews are supposed to believe. We will explore some of the disputes and differing opinions that lay behind those principles., and will also create a safe space for frank, honest and open discussions about our own struggles with belief.

JPH 111/211: Philosophy of Halacha / Philosophy of Jewish Law

Rabbi Alan Haber

Monday 9:00-10:00

1 credits

Have any of the following questions bothered you:

Is *halakha* created by God, or by man? If it is by God, then why do rabbis get to make all the decisions? But if it's human, why do we need to follow it? In either case, how can laws formulated many centuries ago be relevant in the 21st century? How does *halakha* respond to contemporary issues like feminism, multiculturalism, postmodernism and LGBT issues?

Am I really obligated to obey rules determined by certain rabbis, even if their decisions go against my understanding of logic or morality? How do we know that's what God really wants?

And anyway, how does *halakha* work? What is the functional difference between a *d'oraita* and a *derabbanan*?

Between a *halakha* and a *chumra*? Between a *din* and a *minhag*?

Can *halakha* ever change, and if so, how? Who is authorized to make these decisions?

These are some of the issues we'll discuss in this class, as we study the *halakhic* system, what its underlying principles are and how it works.

JPH 301/401: Jewish Humanities Seminar

Rabbi Yehuda Seif

Monday 14:45-16:05

2 credits

The class will introduce the methodology of examining legal texts in a philosophical manner, and explore the rich relationship between Jewish and Western approaches to important questions. It will introduce students to great Jewish texts and thinkers on topics in philosophy, economics, history, religion, literature, and sociology. We will focus on topics like Divine Command and Natural Law, The Problem of Evil, Punishment Theory, Halakha and Morality, the Individual and the Community, the Relationship to the Other, and Chosenness and Particularism. *This class requires preparatory reading before each weekly seminar.*

JPH 302/402 Jewish Political Theory

Rabbi Rafi Eis

Wednesday 16:30-18:00

2 credits

The contemporary world has seen greater hysteria in numerous political debates: Brexit, the election of President Trump, immigration, military force, and many other issues. Much of the contemporary political framework is built on Tanach, but today's discussions have sidelined the Jewish sources that enabled them. This course will discuss the depth of Biblical political theory and provide a Jewish framework for viewing and analyzing contemporary debates.

JPH 303/403 Great Debates

Rabbi Aaron Bayer

Monday 9-10

1 credits

What does Judaism believe about magic, mysticism, who can interpret Torah, is God in the world? Examining the sources of the major important Debates in Jewish thought, law, and history.

Department of Talmud – תלמוד

TAL 101/201: Textual Skills Gemara Seder & Shiur

Rabbi Alan Haber

Monday 10:05-12:05

Tuesday 11:30-13:00

Wednesday 14:45-16:10

Thursday 11:00-13:00

6 credits

In this course we will work on developing the skills required to navigate a *Daf* of *Gemara*, and analyze its rabbinic discourse. We will focus on the structure of the *Gemara*, and the characters that can be found in it. We will also work on both our Aramaic and Talmudic vocabulary, so that by the end of the year a successful student will gain a certain level of familiarity with both. We will also develop the skills to analyze and debate the questions and issues that come up in the *Gemara*.

TAL 301/401: Thematic Gemara Seder & Shiur

Rabbanit Nechama Goldman Barash

Monday 10:05-12:05

Tuesday 11:30-13:00

Wednesday 14:45-16:10

Thursday 11:00-13:00

6 credits

This course is for students who have studied Gemara in the past and are familiar with the structure and basic vocabulary. Each session will consist of chavruta study prior to the shiur, then the shiur itself, which will lead to further understanding and capability in the study of the Talmud.

TAL 501/601: Gemara B'iyun / In-depth Talmud Study

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Monday 10:05-12:05

Tuesday 11:30-13:00

Wednesday 14:45-16:10

Thursday 11:00-14:30

6 credits

In this class, which assumes basic Gemara skills, we will analyze *sugyot* through the eyes of rishonim and delve into the depths of the sugya b'iyun.

סדר ערב - Night Seder

NSD 105 Gemara Bekiyut/ Talmud

Avigayil Unterberg

Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday 20:00-22:00

1 credit

We will be learning Masechet Rosh Hashanah mostly in bekiut style and work on covering ground in the masechet while still working on skill building. The goals of this track are to learn a lot of Torah while gaining the skills you will require to learn Gemara on your own.

NDS 106 Gemara B'iyun/ In-depth Talmud**Adina Cohen****Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday 20:00-22:00****1 credit**

We will be learning Mashechet Chagiga and choosing one topic on each amud to dive into either by looking at some rishonim on the topic or just a general question that comes up off the amud.

NSD 107 Topics in Jewish Thought**Debbie Zimmerman****Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday 20:00-22:00****1 credit**

Why believe in God? Why did God give the Jewish people the Torah? How does God relate to the world? Why do bad things happen to good people? Can a rational person be a person of faith? Together we will try to find answers to these questions and more, and develop a greater understanding of Judaism, faith and the world we live in. We will study works of classic Jewish philosophers like Rambam, Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, and the Maharal, as well as the contemporary scholars like Rav Soloveitchik, Rav Kook, Rabbi Eliezer Berkovitz, Dr. Tamar Ross, and more.

NSD 108 Tanach Bekiut**Yifat Adler****Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday 20:00-22:00****1 credit**

929 perakim. 24 books. The center of our lives. The books that our ancestors died for. Come jump into the study of Tanach BaShana and complete all 24 books this year. Join Bnei Yisrael as they enter Eretz Yisrael and build a society. Acquaint yourself with the Trei Asar Neviim. Learn Shlomo Hamelech's love songs and words of wisdom. Follow Bnei Yisrael on their journey to Bavel and back to Eretz Yisrael. We will study Tanach in a bekiut style and together discuss its interesting stories, layout, language, and questions.

NSD 110 Tanach B'iyun**Sharona Kalickman****Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday 20:00-22:00****1 credit**

Unit 1: Women in Tanach: We will explore in depth the personalities of the women in the Tanach using Pshat, Mefarshim and Midrashim. Unit 2: The Biblical Importance of the Land of Israel: We will trace the sources in Tanach to see why Israel is so significant for the Jewish people. Unit 3: Survey of the Megilot: We will study topics in Ester, Shir HaShirim and Rut which will tie in to the role of women in Judaism and the love of Eretz Yisrael.

NSD 201: Philosophy of Chazal / Philosophy of Sages of the Talmud**Rabbanit Nechama Goldman Barash****Wednesday 21:00-22:00**

1 credit

In this class we will look at the philosophy of Chazal as they interpret and interact with the biblical text. We will mostly look at parshat hashavua, but we will also expand into Rabbinic storytelling.

NSD 202: Practical Halacha**Rabbanit Michal Jacob****Wednesday 21:00-22:00****1 credit**

Learn about Halacha that we encounter in our everyday lives. From waking up in the morning to saying brachot throughout the day.

NSD 203: Mitzvot Ben Adam L'Chavero / Interpersonal Commandments**Dr. Tamara Spitz****Wednesday 21:00-22:00****1 credit**

What does it mean to “love thy fellow as one’s self?” How exactly can we really do that? Explore the spectrum of how the Torah and our tradition structures and legislates interpersonal relations.

NSD 204: Understanding Tefilah**Sarina Novick****Wednesday 21:00-22:00****1 credit**

Davening is more than just shemoneh esrei. And yet, how much time have we spent learning about the various parts of davening? In this night seder track, you will learn about tefillot from weekday, shabbat, and yom tov services. You will learn about how the tefillot are structured, the intent behind the various tefillot leading up to and following shemoneh esrei, and the interplay between those tefillot and parallel themes in Tanakh and Jewish thought. This night seder track will provide insights to enhance your daily tefillah.