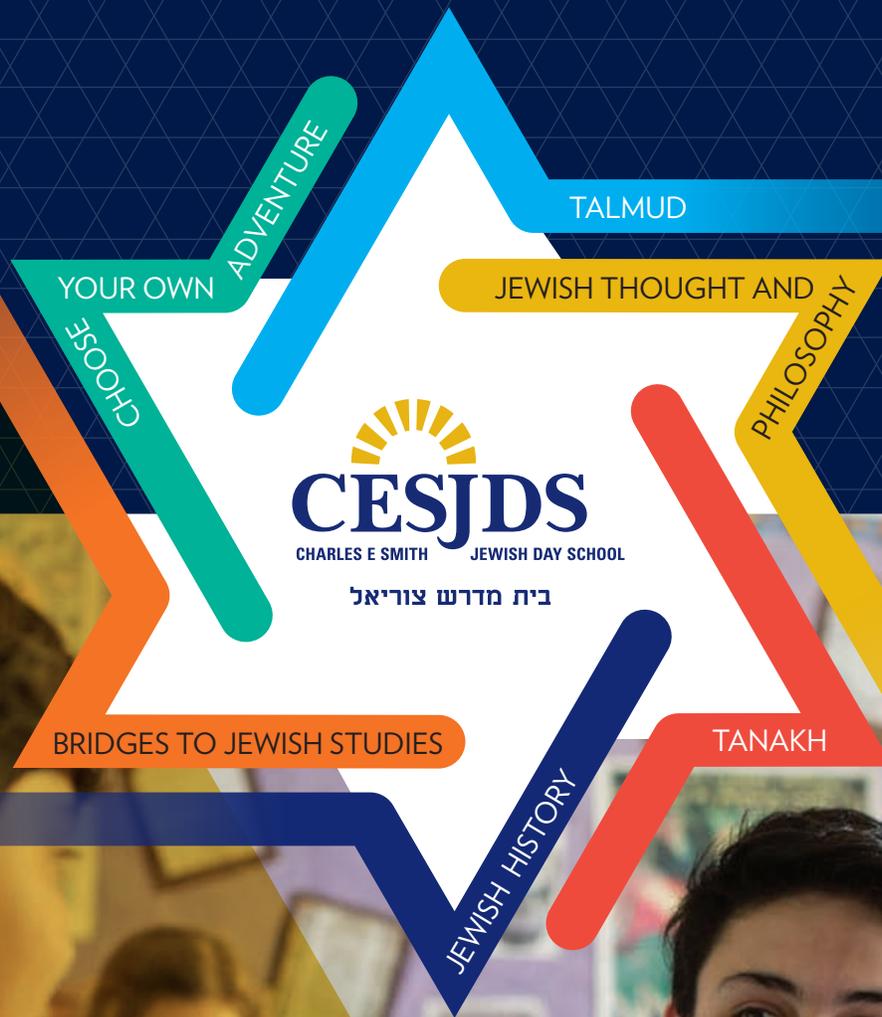


# High School Judaic Pathways at CESJDS



  
**CESJDS**  
CHARLES E SMITH JEWISH DAY SCHOOL  
בית מדרש צוריאל

To Develop  
Each Student's  
Independent  
and Personal  
Jewish Journey





“Whether it’s listening to current popular Israeli songs in my Jewish History class, or studying more in depth about what a part of the Tanakh means, I gain a better understanding of my own Jewish identity.”

• SARA HUGHES '17 •

“The Judaic Pathways offer a unique opportunity for our students to self-direct their learning as they craft their own identities as young Jewish adults, and engage in rigorous academic Judaic learning. Whether they have a vision already for what it is that they want to study or are just eager to explore, there is a path to encourage them.”

• AILEEN GOLDSTEIN '96  
ACADEMIC DEAN •



As high school students grow into confident, compassionate thinkers who engage the world through Jewish values, an important piece of the puzzle is gaining mastery over core Judaic content, concepts and skills, while having the flexibility to individually pursue the topics that most inspire them.

The core classes in Judaic Studies support the development of shared values within a learning community that encourages students to be inspired by one another’s different perspectives. The variety of distribution (choice) course options reflects the different backgrounds and beliefs our students bring to school each day.

Judaic Pathways offer students diverse required and distribution courses to develop each student’s independent and personal Jewish identity and intellect. Students can elect to follow a pathway throughout high school or take samplings from each pathway to forge their own journey in Jewish studies. Pathways are offered in the following specialty areas: Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), Toshba (Rabbinic Literature), Modern Jewish History, and Jewish Thought & Philosophy. CESJDS also offers the Bridges to Jewish Studies pathway for those who have not previously studied in a Jewish day school.



# Talmud

The Talmud pathway offers students the opportunity to become proficient in the classical Jewish skill of Talmud study. Geared toward conceptual thinkers who have a working knowledge of Hebrew, these courses teach students the skills to access and study Talmud and Talmudic commentaries using both traditional and contemporary methodologies. Students will learn to parse Talmudic arguments, engage in debate and discussion regarding the text, and closely study various tractates of Talmud throughout their high school years.

“My parents were invested and very supportive of my decision. I was fascinated and engaged in every single class, and went home and discussed class topics with them, as well as with my grandfather who went to Yeshiva. As I move on to my college career, I will continue to be engaged in Jewish studies, education, and extracurricular activities.”

• GABI SWAGEL '16 •

“In the Talmud curriculum, we are not only teaching the conceptual frameworks and the arguments of the rabbis of the Mishna and Gemara (including Rashi, Tosafot and others), but also rhetorical devices, technical terms, and vocabulary within a document that is the backbone of Jewish life.”

• RABBI MARCI JACOBS ARONCHICK,  
JEWISH TEXT TEACHER •



“Whether you aspire to be a rabbi, want to be intellectually challenged, desire to know Jewish laws and practices, feel a need to enhance your spirituality, or simply want to further refine decoding, analysis, and logic skills, the Talmud program at CESJDS can help you achieve all of this and more.”

• PAUL BLANK, JEWISH TEXT TEACHER •



# Tanakh



CESJDS students learn to appreciate the Tanakh as both an historical work and a critical piece of the Jewish religion. Through this pathway, students have the opportunity to delve more deeply into the study of Tanakh, exploring critical themes, expanding their skills in interpreting text, and engaging with classical Biblical commentaries and contemporary interpretations ranging from modern commentaries to art and music. Text is approached in the original Hebrew, as well as in translation.

## Jewish Thought & Philosophy

The Jewish Thought & Philosophy pathway highlights the study of traditions, laws, and values as seen through rabbinic texts. Students “unpack” these aspects as they appear in the Tanakh (Bible) and the Talmud, and reflect on interpretation by rabbis including Maimonides and Rashi, while analyzing modern commentaries as well. Students are provided the intellectual challenge to seek answers to their questions about Jewish tradition and law, while exploring the texts and themes as they apply to one’s evolving identity and true self.

“The most intriguing aspect of the school’s Tanakh curriculum has been how often many similar themes arise in otherwise very different stories. It allows for very interesting analysis and comparing/contrasting.”

• AARON ROBINSON '17 •

“The structure of the Tanakh seminars is really special because it involves a great deal of individual study. It allows me to search for key details, which is followed up with the guidance of my teacher and peers.”

• SARA HUGHES '17 •



“I have been able to apply what I have learned in Jewish Thought & Philosophy, as well as other text classes, to real life. The moral aspect of Judaism has been my biggest takeaway so far.

The Jewish Norms and Practices class that I took was truly fascinating. Our conversations were open-minded, non-judgmental, and are about sharing different viewpoints and asking questions. No one pushes their point of view on anyone else.”

• EMMA WALDMAN '17 •



“I love the flexibility of CESJDS’s Judaic Studies program and have been able to identify themes in the classes that I have chosen. In Modern Jewish History, we had the opportunity to trace our family lineage before and after the Holocaust, and compare our own family history with classmates. This helped foster a connection between the past and the present.”

• SARA HECKELMAN '17 •

# Jewish History

The Jewish History program engages students in the study of Jewish history from ancient times through today, exploring the development of the Jewish community over time. Through the use of textual study and analysis, simulations, and project-based learning, all courses challenge students to envision themselves as a part of Jewish history as they deepen their understanding of significant events and major ideas of Jewish history, and develop critical-analysis skills.

“In each class I teach, there are numerous overarching ‘essential questions’ discussed over the course of a semester. Questions in Arab-Israeli Conflict, for example, include: ‘How do we use dual narratives for setting a framework to understand the historical significance of the Conflict? What impact do narratives have on future generations?’ These questions challenge our students to think critically and creatively.”

• AARON BREGMAN, JEWISH HISTORY TEACHER AND ISRAEL ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR •

## JEWISH HISTORY PATHWAY

“The study of Jewish History at CESJDS is both a personal and community journey. Students and teachers are committed to the academic study of Jewish History, as well as to the development of individual Jewish identity informed by Jewish experiences across time and space.”

• DR. SARA COXE, CHAIR, SARA AND SAMUEL J. LESSANS JEWISH HISTORY DEPARTMENT •



# Bridges

Bridges to Jewish Studies is a unique path specifically designed for students new to Jewish day school. Through this pathway, students learn the foundations of Jewish study, including introductions to the corpus of Jewish text, themes of Jewish history, and highlights of Jewish literacy. Additionally, an introductory Hebrew class (Ulpan) is offered for students at varying grade levels.

BRIDGES PATHWAY



“As a student new to CESJDS from public school, the Judaic Studies classes are helping me gain a better understanding that Judaism is more than just what the Torah says.”

• BEN KATZ '17 •

“I have really enjoyed the structure of my Judaic Studies classes. While there is a ‘lecture’ aspect, the format is primarily discussion-based, and the environment is comfortable for anyone to speak up and share their own insights.”

• ANDREW FUCHS '18 •

# Choose Your Own Adventure

Students are encouraged to follow their passions in choosing their Judaic distribution courses. They may choose from among all of the offerings to design a course of study that is of intellectual interest to them as they explore Jewish tradition and work to define their Jewish identities.



“My parents primarily sent me to CESJDS for its strong general studies—the English, Math, and Science programs—but the Judaic classes have always been some of my favorites. What I love most about the Jewish History and Jewish Text curricula is the wide variety of courses they offer. I have taken classes on everything from post-1945 world Jewry to Biblical themes in world literature, and the best part is that I still have so much to learn. It feels great to find connections between courses that seem completely unrelated. The most valuable lessons I’ve learned from these courses have not just been about names and dates, but instead the importance of critical reading and of curiosity.”

• ARIELLE WEINSTEIN '17 •

“We give our students tools to make choices in an informed way. Jewish heritage, history, and law can impact students’ future endeavors including where they live, who they marry, and what they pursue as a career.”

• AVIVA GERSHMAN, CHAIR, JEWISH TEXT DEPARTMENT •

# Course Offerings

	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
<b>Talmud</b>	Talmud I	Talmud II	Talmud III	Talmud IV
<b>Tanakh</b>	<b>Classical Biblical Commentary</b> OR <b>Leadership in Biblical Literature</b>	Tanakh Seminar: Love Stories Tanakh Seminar: From Establishment to Destruction Tanakh Seminar: Ethics and Morals Tanakh Seminar: Wisdom Literature Biblical Themes in World Literature	Tanakh Seminar: Love Stories Tanakh Seminar: From Establishment to Destruction Tanakh Seminar: Ethics and Morals Tanakh Seminar: Wisdom Literature Biblical Themes in World Literature	Tanakh Seminar: Love Stories Tanakh Seminar: From Establishment to Destruction Tanakh Seminar: Ethics and Morals Tanakh Seminar: Wisdom Literature Biblical Themes in World Literature
<b>Modern Jewish History</b>	<b>Ancient Medieval History</b>	<b>Modern Jewish History</b>	<b>History of Modern Israel</b>	Contemporary Issues in Israeli Society American Jewish History Through Film and Literature Contemporary American Jewish Society History of World Jewry Post-1945
<b>Jewish Thought &amp; Philosophy</b>	<b>Ethical Dilemmas</b> <b>Jewish Lifecycle and Ritual</b>	Great Jewish Thinkers Jewish Moral Literature and Human Nature Jewish Norms and Practices	Jewish Moral Literature and Human Nature Jewish Norms and Practices Jewish Theology Rendering Legal Decisions Modern Jewish Philosophy: Revelation and Law	Rendering Legal Decisions Modern Jewish Philosophy: Revelation and Law Jewish Theology
<b>Bridges to Jewish Studies</b>  <i>(These courses are recommended for lateral-entry students enrolled in the Bridges Program.)</i>	<b>Ethical Dilemmas</b> <b>Jewish Lifecycle and Ritual</b> <b>Leadership in Biblical Literature</b>	<b>Modern Jewish History</b> Jewish Norms and Practices Jewish Moral Literature and Human Nature Biblical Themes in World Literature	<b>History of Modern Israel</b> Jewish Norms and Practices Jewish Moral Literature and Human Nature Biblical Themes in World Literature American Jewish History Through Film and Literature History of World Jewry Post-1945 Jewish Theology Modern Jewish Philosophy: Revelation and Law	Jewish Moral Literature and Human Nature Biblical Themes in World Literature American Jewish History Through Film and Literature History of World Jewry Post-1945 Jewish Theology Modern Jewish Philosophy: Revelation and Law

**Bold title indicates the course is required of all students as part of the Judaic core curriculum.**