

# BCHSJS - SPRING 2017

## SUNDAY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Period 1 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### **Disney and Judaism**

grades 8-9

Period 1

*Ms. Tova Sklar*

Disney is known for great movies, awesome soundtracks, and stories involving Jewish ideals and Biblical themes. (Wait...what??) Shocking, isn't it? Test your knowledge of Disney and Torah as we watch clips from some of the best-loved Disney movies and delve into Jewish texts, discovering common themes or similar story lines between the two. Perhaps Walt Disney and his staff weren't as original and innovative as they claimed to have been.

#### **The Ethicist: Part II**

grades 9-11

Period 1

*Dr. Daniel Rynhold*

You rent a house with some other students who give you permission to host a party. After the party you discover that a housemate has borrowed a bike and left it in a downstairs hallway. The bike has been vandalized, presumably by a party guest. Given that no one will confess to the crime, are you responsible for the repairs? Every weekend, the New York Times Magazine article *The Ethicist* takes a moral dilemma like this and offers an answer. Taking some of the very same dilemmas as our starting point, we will explore what a Jewish perspective can add to the discussion. *Former students may enroll in this class again as there are all new issues.*

#### **Fact or Fiction**

grades 8-9

Period 1

*Rabbi Gary Hoffman*

Join us as we travel throughout the world with scientists and archaeologists as well as with Biblical scholars in search of the mythical and exotic. We will examine Jewish primary and secondary textual sources as well as view videos about the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, the real "sin cities" of Sodom and Gemorrah, the splitting of the Red Sea, the Ark of the Covenant, Solomon's gold, the Queen of Sheba, the Ten Lost Tribes as well as the Bible Codes. This promises to be an exciting and informative experience with much lively discussion and speculation.

#### **The Office**

grades 8-9

Period 1

*Mr. Mike Alweis*

We will tackle serious ethical questions using the hit TV show *The Office* - together with selected texts from the Jewish tradition. Using clips from the shows, we will find that in their own strange way, Michael Scott, Dwight Schrute, and Jim and Pam can teach us some valuable ethical lessons. Through discussing the clips and studying related texts, students will be encouraged to explore theological and ethical questions including the relationship between body and soul, how we confront death, and acting in accordance with the "golden mean".

#### **Prayer & Poses**

grades 9-11

Period 1

*Ms. Avital Moss*

Wake-up your body and soul first thing in the morning at BCHSJS. We will be spending half the time in yoga practice to cultivate mindfulness, and the other half exploring and attempting to understand the words of the Siddur. No prior experience in yoga or prayer is required, but be prepared to walk away at the end of the semester excited for both.

#### **Semites, South Park and the Simpsons**

grades 8-9

Period 1

*Dr. Mark Silk*

Homer Simpson may be rude and crude, but can we learn about religion from him and the residents of South Park? We will explore ethical questions through the eyes and words of Hillel, Shamai, Homer, and Cartman.

# Period 1

## 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **The Ethicist: Part II**

grades 9-11      Period 1

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You rent a house with some other students who give you permission to host a party. After the party you discover that a housemate has borrowed a bike and left it in a downstairs hallway. The bike has been vandalized, presumably by a party guest. Given that no one will confess to the crime, are you responsible for the repairs? Every weekend, the New York Times Magazine article *The Ethicist* takes a moral dilemma like this and offers an answer. Taking some of the very same dilemmas as our starting point, we will explore what a Jewish perspective can add to the discussion. *Former students may enroll in this class again as there are all new issues.*

### **Great Jewish Short Stories**

grades 10-11      Period 1

*Ms. Deborah Stack*

Read some of the most shocking, hilarious, and frightening stories of all time! Each week we will read a short story by the most iconic Jewish writers in history, from Isaac Bashevis Singer to Etgar Keret. As a class we will read and discuss each story, reflecting on each spine-chilling or laughter-inducing tale.

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### **Senior Seminar**

grade 12  
Required      Period 1

*Mr. Barnett Goldman*

Mandatory for all high school seniors. This course will challenge students to think about their own Jewish identity. Where do they fit in the American Jewish experience and how will religion play a part in their lives in the future? We will prepare you for the potential challenges you will face as a Jew on your college campuses, including handling anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism on the college campus, and we will also help you process the end of a great journey through BCHSJS and your path following high school. You will create phenomenal projects for graduation, the school, and prepare for the life ahead of you while setting the groundwork for staying in touch in college and beyond.

## Period 2

### 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### **The Holocaust Through the Eyes of Maus II**

grades 8-9

Period 2

*Dr. Daniel Rynhold*

Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer prize winning book *Maus* is one of many works about the Holocaust. But *Maus* is unique in being a graphic novel – ok, it's a comic strip – that depicts Jews as mice, and Nazis as cats. We will be studying *Maus* to learn about the Holocaust through one man's experience while also raising questions about appropriate ways of preserving the memory of the Holocaust in art – whether in novels, films, paintings, or historical research. *This course is a continuation of the fall semester. New students are welcome.*

#### **Israel: Current Events & Controversies**

grades 9-12

Period 2

*Dr. Mark Silk*

It's not just falafel and a free trip abroad. We will explore challenging issues facing Israel in 2017 and beyond. Some of the questions we will debate include: Should Israel exchange land for peace? What role should the settlements have in the future of Israel? What does it mean to be both a Jewish and a democratic state?

#### **Netflix and Jews**

grades 8-9

Period 2

*Ms. Avital Moss*

Let's binge learn something that matters. Explore parallels between Netflix's most popular shows and the current week's Torah portion.

#### **Paint Like the Greats**

grades 8-12

Period 2

*Ms. Deborah Stack*

Learn to paint in the styles of the biggest Jewish names in the art world. We will explore some of the most influential Jewish artists of history. We will create Agamographs like Yaacov Agam, explore the many painting styles of Marc Chagall, and explore the expressionist paintings of Arnold Schoenberg. Learn about influential Jews in every field of art and celebrate their work with your own unique creations. *Former students may enroll in this class again.*

#### **A True Beleiber:**

grades 8-9

Period 2

#### **Finding Jewish Faith Through Popular Music**

*Ms. Yardena Bannett*

From Taylor to Bruno to Eminem, music is a powerful tool that we use to convey important messages. Let's listen to the artists and their songs and discuss themes which either relate to or go against the Jewish tradition.

# Period 2

## 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Follow the Leader: Part II**

grades 10-11

Period 2

*Mr. Barnett Goldman*

It might just be semantics but is there a difference between being a Jewish leader versus a leader who is Jewish? Participants in this unique course will learn the nuts and bolts of what our ancestors, our historical texts and our role models might say it takes to be a Jewish leader. We will grapple together with the following questions: How are teens in Israel and teens in America prepared to be leaders in their communities? Are there differences between how leadership is perceived in America and Israel? Is Jewish leadership different from American leadership? Come hone your leadership skills that can be used in your Jewish community and in your "secular" community by learning how to lead a discussion, manage your time, and deal with conflict resolution. You will have the opportunity to meet with prominent American and Israeli leaders, as well as get to know your peer leaders in Israel and create life-long friendships. Upon successful completion, participants will be awarded a leadership certificate. Some students will have the opportunity to travel to Israel on a Fellowship. *(Only students who were accepted to this class in the fall are eligible to continue with Part II.)*

### **Headlines: Halachic Debates of Current Events**

grades 10-12

Period 2

*Rabbi Gary Hoffman*

We will be examining articles and discussing podcasts which take items drawn from the news as starting points for in-depth analysis of questions at the forefront of our contemporary conversation. Issues to be examined include Leiby Kletzky's Killer, The Gilad Shalit Deal, A Kosher Cheeseburger, and many more.

### **Heroes & Villains in the Bible**

grades 10-12

Period 2

*Mr. Michael Alweis*

The Jewish Bible (Or Tanach, as it's called in Hebrew) has many incredible stories that have captured the imaginations of movie directors, artists, and more for thousands of years. Join us as we dive into Judaism's most sacred books and explore epic tales of good and evil, espionage, romance, and more. No knowledge of Hebrew required.

### **Israel: Current Events & Controversies**

grades 9-12

Period 2

*Dr. Mark Silk*

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## Period 3

### 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### **Jewish Infused Improv: Beginners**

grades 8-12

Period 3

*Dr. Mark Silk*

Who knew that improv could improve communication, cultivate leadership skills and develop Jewish values? From warm-ups to full scenes, each class will develop students' improvisation skills while reinforcing Jewish values.

#### **Jewish Volunteer Corp**

grades 9-12

Period 3

*Mr. Barnett Goldman*

In the Jewish tradition, there is a mitzvah to honor the elderly. In this service-learning class, we will learn together as well as be actively involved in volunteering with a group of seniors. Approximately half of our class sessions will take place (during school hours - transportation provided) at The Daughters of Miriam. We will build relationships with a group of seniors, learn their Jewish histories, and document them in engaging videos and a year-long project. This class is for those who want to make a difference for the young at heart and to build a bridge to the generations that came before us. *New students are welcome.*

#### **The Week in Review**

grades 8-9

Period 3

*Rabbi Gary Hoffman*

The major newsworthy events of the week will be examined in light of their effects upon Israel and Jews everywhere. 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. *Former students may enroll in this class again.*

#### **What Would You Do?**

grades 8-9

Period 3

*Mr. Mike Alweis*

What should you do when faced with a dilemma that compels you to act? Intervene, mind your own business, get involved, or walk by? Do we take the chance and follow our instincts, or do we feel apprehensive about getting involved because of what we see in the news on a daily basis? There are innocent bystanders who are injured every day. Intervening is risky business. Each person needs to do his or her own calculations before stepping up and stepping in for at least two reasons: first, you need to think about your own safety and the safety of those around you. And second, you need to be able to successfully pull off the intervention. Primetime hired actors and staged scenarios to gauge how people would react when confronted with situations that tested their basic instincts. The staged situations ranged from rowdy kids in a restaurant to a 'tiger mom' gone too far to an interracial couple being harassed. Let's find out how you would handle some of these situations, and see if your reactions are similar to what our sages and great rabbis have had to say about it through the centuries.

#### **You Be the Judge II**

grades 8-9

Period 3

*Ms. Deborah Stack*

"You Be the Judge" is an exercise in values clarification. Through the presentation of different cases depicting moral dilemmas, we will explore underlying issues that confront and challenge us in our everyday lives. The class will be run in a courtroom fashion and students will be required to debate and participate. *You may take this class if you took it in the fall as a different book will be used.*

## **Period 3**

### **10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade**

#### **Biblical Figures in the Analyst's Chair**

**grades 10-12**

**Period 3**

*Dr. Daniel Rynhold*

We all know some Bible stories. But don't we worry how it could be that one of our forefathers - Jacob - was such a liar? And what exactly was Jonah's problem with giving a town the opportunity to repent? Why was the prophet Elijah suicidal? We will be digging beneath the surface of the Torah to reveal the deep lessons we can learn from the personalities behind the stories. *New students are welcome.*

#### **Does G-d Use Snapchat?**

**grades 10-12**

**Period 3**

#### **Jewish Philosophy & Mysticism**

*Ms. Yardena Bannett*

Have you ever questioned why a 3,000 year old tradition has anything to do with you? Is Judaism a thing of the past that has little relevance in the year 2017? Come join a wide array of discussions from some of the greatest Jewish thinkers of the last century as we delve into topics such as love and romance, free will and what G-d does in His free time.

#### **Jewish Infused Improv: Beginners**

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#### **Judaism for Atheists**

**grades 10-12**

**Period 2**

*Ms. Avital Moss*

We will challenge conventional views of religion and refocus through the lens of the secular world. Explore psychological benefits of prayer, ancient man's necessity for the tribal mentality, and more. This class is open to students of every belief, but demands a high level of respect for our entire class community.