

**AJL Course Catalog - Trimester 1**  
**September 6-November 23, 2025**

**Period 1: 10:30 - 11:10 AM**

**Deborah Wolf:**

**2. Sacred Spaces: Jewish Architecture, Art, and Symbols**

**Description:**

What makes a space feel holy? From ancient temples to modern synagogues, from mezuzot to street art in Tel Aviv—this class explores the visual language of Judaism. We'll study sacred architecture, ritual objects, and symbols that connect tradition with personal meaning.

**Class topics may include:**

Tour of global synagogue styles (Sephardic, Ashkenazi, modern)

Design your own mezuzah case or tallit pattern

Symbolism deep dive: Stars, lions, pomegranates, broken glass

How art helps communities express identity and resist oppression

This class pairs well with slide presentations, simple creative materials, and even a virtual field trip or local synagogue visit

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**Rabbi David Fine:**

Join Rabbi David Fine in reading some great Jewish science fiction short stories and explore how thinking about outer space can help us better understand ourselves.

## **Rabbi Gary Hoffman:**

### **Why Do Jewish?**

*Why Do Jewish A Manifesto for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish Peoplehood* - (Zach Bodner)

“Today, in the 21st century, living Jewishly ought to mean more than who your mother was,” he writes in the book’s first chapter. “Doing Jewish means taking some specific actions, living by some specific values, celebrating some specific moments, and recognizing you are part of some specific family.”

How do you live a more meaningful life? How might you feel more connected to others, to the world around you, to the past and the future? In an era when we can choose our own identities, why might we choose to identify as Jews? These are just some of the questions Zack Bodner addresses as he thoughtfully shifts from asking “Why be Jewish?” to “Why do Jewish?”

Bodner embraces the power of Jewish culture—humour, food, music, and arts—as accessible entry points, but he’s careful not to overstate their sustaining power. “Culture without content becomes nostalgia,” he warns. “And nostalgia doesn’t create proud Jews.

## Period 2: 12:20-1:00 PM

### **Deborah Wolf:**

#### **Challah Without the Oven: Jewish Cooking & Culture**

##### **Description:**

No stove? No problem. In this low-mess, high-flavor class, students will explore Jewish identity through food. Each week ties a hands-on recipe to a Jewish holiday or idea—while we mix, we'll also dig into history, values, and tradition. Recipes will be no-bake or assembled in class, with baking instructions to complete at home if needed.

##### **Examples:**

- **Shabbat** – DIY Challah dough + braiding demo (bake at home)
- **Purim** – No-bake hamantaschen with dried fruit + chocolate
- **Tu B'Shevat** – Seven species parfaits
- **Yom Kippur** – Pre-fast nut/date energy bites

Also includes discussions on kashrut, family food traditions, and tikkun olam in food justice.

### **Rabbi Gary Hoffman:**

#### **Torah Tech**

In this course students will take items drawn from news articles as starting points for in-depth analysis of questions at the forefront of both American and Jewish law and ethics.

This course is intended to stimulate students' thought and interest and to serve as a catalyst for further analysis and discussion. Students will learn to apply important ideas to situations they personally encounter while navigating their own observance of Judaism within the realities posed by the world in which they live.

Our discussions will take into account that we live in a society composed mostly of non-Jews governed by secular law that values a separation of church and state. However, our topics directly impact the everyday lives of contemporary Jews.

- a. medical risks
- b. are embryos sellable
- c. vaccinations: must we?
- d. neuroprosthetics
- e. space travel

- f. lab grown meat: kosher? Parve?
- g. video, DNA, polygraph as testimony
- h. computer-brain interfaces
- i. robotics
- j. recreational & medical marijuana
- k. performance enhancing drugs in sports
- l. adultery, queen esther & the Mossad
- m. preimplantation genetic diagnosis
- n. animal human hybrids
- o. torturing a terrorist to procure information
- p. prisoner exchange
- q. land for peace
- r. surrogate motherhood
- s. abortion vs. right to life

### **Barnett Goldman:**

#### **Connections through Time: 8th Grade Core**

This will be a highly interactive course for students to learn about BCHSJS, themselves, and their new classmates. Not only will there be a ton of fun activities, there will also be opportunities to explore the history, beliefs, and customs of Judaism. Looking forward to some awesome projects, activities, videos, and discussions!

### **Shalom Brauser:**

#### **Donuts and Discussion**

Join us for a chill and fun discussion of fascinating Jewish topics that you actually care about. Why do bad things happen to good people? Is being a good person and being a good Jew the same thing? How can God expect us to follow his commandments if we've never even spoken to him? Come with any question you want, any idea you want to discuss, and we'll have a great time while talking about it together. Oh, and also there's donuts. See you soon