Teaching Integrated Jewish Humanities in High School:
American Literature, Philosophy and Jewish Thought

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"This class changed the way I thought, the way we all thought, and the way we thought about each other. Tikvah didn't replace my life, (as I feared it would); it changed it, and it changed who I am."

These are the words of a young woman who took the course that we have been co-teaching for the past three years at Kohelet Yeshiva High School (KYHS) in suburban Philadelphia. The 11th Grade English and Humanities course entitled, "The Individual and Society in History, Philosophy, Jewish Thought and Literature," is referred to as 'Tikvah,' because it was initially supported by the Tikvah Fund High School Scholars' Program. Begun in 2009 under the leadership of Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Seif and Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, The Tikvah Fund sponsored rigorous courses in a number of Jewish day schools along with a number of retreats, special lectures, and an essay competition. Its mission was to:

> educate the future intellectual, moral, and civic leaders of the Jewish people by giving the very best Jewish high school students a chance to study great texts and big questions at the university level. The Tikvah program is about the spirited study of ideas—God and politics, faith and reason, love and death, ethics and economics. It is rooted in the belief that the best high school students should study the most serious human things, and that Jewish students need to explore and understand the great contributions of Jewish thought to human self-understanding, and the great contributions of philosophy, political thought, literature, and theology to charting the Jewish future. (Tikvah High School Brochure)

The classes in each participating school had their own flavor, and the class that we developed in 2011 at KYHS integrates our school's core literary curriculum, a chronological study of American literature, with the study of classic works of Western and Jewish philosophy, history and Jewish law. We achieve this integration by overlaying topics in the literature with Jewish and philosophic sources on the same topics, retaining the integrity of the American literature course. In addition, because the class incorporates so much non-fiction, we were able to obtain its certification as an AP English Language and Composition course.

Mission and Vision

The class mantra, "What happens in Tikvah, stays in Tikvah," reflects an environment of intellectual freedom that is critical to our mission and vision. This innovative course pioneers a new model of synthesis between Jewish and general studies. While the traditional day school model has students learning numerous individual subjects like math, history, literature, Gemara, Chumash, etc., with little crossover or synthesis, our course integrates American Literature with Jewish Ideas. Students not only study each subject at the highest level, they compare and contrast the visions of both, toward the goal of exploring the ways in which biblical, Judaic and philosophical approaches to life's questions speak to universal human approaches to those same questions. Essentially, this course teaches that Judaism's rich history of philosophy and law deals with the same universal issues addressed by Western literature and philosophy. Kohelet Yeshiva High School, whose motto is "Torah for the Real World," is an ideal institution for the course. Not only is Tikvah a natural extension of our school's guiding principle, but it provides an immersive, passionate dual curricular experience.

Our mission also encompasses teaching students to analyze literary texts, apply Jewish/philosophical works to American literature, identify various approaches to a topic from a

range of texts, and handle more and longer pieces simultaneously. Classroom time, which takes place over seven periods/week (4 periods of AP English, plus 3 periods replacing Navi) is built around a teaching method called "interpretive discussion," based largely on seminar-style classes at the University of Chicago (See Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon, *Turning the Soul: Teaching through Conversation in the High School*, University of Chicago Press, 1991). The texts we read contain deep and powerful ideas, but often do not have one interpretation, and the role of the teachers is not to give an "authoritative" reading of the text, or to push the group toward a consensus. We require students to ask not only "How do I better understand the fiction because of the philosophical sources?" but also, "How do I better understand the topic because of the literary, Judaic and philosophical approaches to it that I have now mastered?" By extension, and perhaps most importantly, we want class participants to internalize Jewish philosophy's contributions to universal questions so that in the future, our students can engage confidently with others on these issues. To that end, students consider topics in light of their essential questions in terms of philosophical, Judaic, legal and literary approaches to those issues. In doing so, the class explores the rich relationship between Jewish and Western approaches to important questions such as man's place in the world; punishment; slavery; the individual and the community; filial responsibility; the definition of success and the American Dream; free will, fate and destiny; particularism; and the tension between tradition and modernity.

Because the junior year in English is devoted primarily to American literature, including Native American and Colonial writing, political documents and speeches, as well as the American short story, novel, drama and poetry genres, the course educates students in the nature, purpose and evolution of American literature. It teaches them to discern American literature's strains of self-creation, autobiography and pioneering spirit; to perceive the ways in which the national character

at a particular time in history is reflected in the literature of that period; to assess the American canon in terms of contemporaneous British literature; and to introduce students to great American Jewish texts and thinkers on topics in philosophy, economics, history, religion, literature and sociology.

Admission to the course is based on multiple criteria. Students must meet 3 of 4 benchmarks: 1. Combined PSAT score of 115 (1140) or 570 each in Reading and Writing sections, 2. Teacher recommendation, 3. Grade of A- in Honors English Class, 4. Submission of a student's best English paper with teacher's comments on it. In addition, students must write 2 short (400 word) application essays on the following topics:

1. Tell us about your intellectual passion. If given the time, freedom, and opportunity, without any other distractions, to sink your teeth into an area of study which excites you, what would you be thinking/reading/writing about? How might you convey that passion to others? Be specific about your interests.

2. Describe a scene from any literary or other cultural (cinematic, dance, musical, artistic) work that conveys what you consider an important truth about the human condition.

Content

The rigorous Tikvah course is the result of many weeks of intense collaborative curriculum development performed during the summer. Initially, we worked for weeks planning, developing, questioning, creating, and calendaring the course's every component. We repeated this process each intervening summer to strengthen, clarify and fine-tune the syllabus. Actually, the course is always a work in progress, as new material emerges every day, and we incorporate relevant articles as we discover them.

Each of the course's twelve units lasts from one to four weeks, and includes works from the corpus of American literature, studied in chronological order, alongside selected pieces from philosophical and legal texts from both Jewish and other sources. Most units conclude with a

substantial written assignment on one or more of the topic's major themes, submitted on paper. Many units also include intermediate written assignments, completed and submitted electronically through weekly wiki posts. This is where students respond to the week's essential question, thus feeding and percolating ideas for discussion before class. All assignments are held to the school-wide standards of MLA documentation, and students receive consistent instruction on how to do so. We provide all texts, and those written originally in Hebrew are furnished in Hebrew as well as English. Because subtleties, emphases, or entire points can be lost in translation, it is crucial that students not rely solely on the English translation of Hebrew readings.

In bringing in outside thinkers we broaden the students' exposure to philosophical scholarship. For example, two professors of philosophy at Eastern University, R.J. Snell and Jonathan Yonan, each engaged our class with a wonderful discussion of natural law and social contract; David Pelcovitz led a seminar on the philosophical foundations of gratitude; and R' Mosheh Lichtenstein discussed the nature of filial responsibility. In addition, the class is required to participate in the Tikvah Scholars Circle, a monthly after-school mishmar program on Wednesday evenings led by Professor Steve Goldman of Lehigh University, who discussed the Philosophy of Science with the group. Students also attend the Speakers Program at The Agora Institute at Eastern University, in suburban Philadelphia, which has featured Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Tikvah Fund Executive Director Eric Cohen, and Archbishop of Philadelphia Charles J. Chaput. Our capstone experience is an annual trip to Yeshiva University. This is where professors from various disciplines speak to students on a topic relevant to course discussions, followed by a visit to the Tikvah Fund offices, where recently, Micah Goodman, author, professor and Director of *Ein Prat*, the Israel Academy of Leadership, addressed the class about Israel's next dream.

Synopsis of Topics, Essential Questions, Texts, and Essay Questions

Given the course's many units, we will describe only three in depth. Please see the entire course syllabus in the Appendix. Since our topics are extrapolated from the American literature canon, we open with "Beginnings: Man's Relation to Nature," in terms of the following texts: Native American Origin Myths, Smith's *A General History of Virginia,* Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Winthrop's "Sermon on the Arbella," Patrick Henry's and Thomas Paine's speeches, Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*, and prayer-poems by Puritan minister Edward Taylor and the Tewa Tribe. These provide Native American, Colonial, and Christian perspectives on man's place in the world. We also read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and Kennedy's *Inaugural Address* as evidence of these Colonial views' endurance. For Jewish philosophical positions on man's place in the world, especially the tension over the majesty and the humility of Man, we study excerpts from Genesis 1-2, the Saadya Gaon's *Beliefs and Opinions*, Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, the Maharal's *Tiferet Yisrael*, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's *The Lonely Man of Faith, Majesty and Humility, Halakhic Man,* and *The Emergence of Ethical Man.* The rather elastic essay question derived from these primary texts asks students to compare any two perspectives on the purpose of man's place in the world.

Unlike the eclectic non-fiction that American authors produced during Colonial times, Twain's definitive American novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, alone serves as the foundational American literature text for our slavery unit. Its essential questions ask: Can physical slavery be reconciled with an ideal world? How does natural law theory reconcile physical servitude? How is social contract theory used to justify slavery? In what ways can one be enslaved? To what extent is slavery a matter of perspective?

Our goals in this particular unit are three-fold. First, we want to differentiate the Jewish concept of slavery from that of pagan and Christian ideations and discuss why such a repugnant

institution is in the Torah. Second, we want to give the students the ability to distinguish between natural law and social contract theory. Third, we want our students to consider the essential question, "What is liberty?" For philosophical approaches to slavery and freedom, enriched with the benefit of guest professors of philosophy, we study excerpts from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, J. J. Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, Lincoln's "Fragment on Slavery," Plato's *Crito,* Aristotle's *The Politics*, Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty,* Bob Marley's "Redemption Song," and *The Declaration of Independence.* These are juxtaposed with Biblical texts from Exodus 14, 21; Leviticus 25; and Deuteronomy 14; in addition to Jewish philosophical approaches to slavery and freedom from Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, Rubinstein's *Avadim*, and Kook's *Iggerot Ha-Ra'ayah* and selections from his *Passover Haggadah.* The paper topic that invites students to engage these American, Western and Judaic theories of slavery is: In what ways are *Huck Finn*'s characters enslaved and/or free?

After slavery, we move on to the other defining American theme in our unit, The Definition of Success and the American Dream. Its core texts are Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, and R' Soloveitchik's *Kol Dodi Dofek*. Here we consider fundamental moral issues such as "How do you make decisions based on your ideas of the meaning of life? What makes a life successful? To what extent does society determine success or failure? What is a hero? How does success relate to dignity? What is the American Dream? What is the Jewish approach to the American Dream? What is the Jewish conception of the 'good life?'" This unit's mode of integration is oral rather than written. Students are asked to construct a case study of someone in a moral dilemma, and use the literary, biblical and philosophical sources to reach a resolution. Presenters may choose to use Spoken Word, Power Point, video, narrative, song, or any other

creative format.

Instructional Methodology

During our weekly seven periods, we co-teach with students and ourselves seated in the round. By integrating the University of Chicago style of instruction with the teaching methods in Sophie Haroutunian Gordon's *Learning to Teach through Discussion: Teaching to Turn the Soul*, we marry interdisciplinary education that concentrates study on primary documents and classic texts, conducted through question-driven discussion rather than lectures, to Socratic Method and interpretive discussion. Weekly class wiki responses to essential questions jump-start student thinking about the texts at hand, in concert with the in-class written component of our methodology -- Bard College's *Institute for Writing and Thinking*'s approach described in *Writing-Based Teaching* (Vilardi and Chang 2009). Using this method's "Writing to Learn" and "Writing to Read" strategies, prior to class discussion we ask students to write for five or ten minutes on text-specific prompts such as "When _____ argues _____, he is assuming _____;" "Locate and respond to a passage that is important to you, and a passage that you think is important to the author;" "What question is this text answering? What problem is it addressing?" "What are the author's prejudices? What are your prejudices?" "Starting from the conclusion, what does the text say?" (Paul Connolly. http://www.bard.edu/iwt/resources/handouts/pdf downloaded 30 June 2014). We have found that these short 'loop writing' exercises including response-starters such as "I don't understand … I'm surprised that . . . This reminds me of . . . ." open up texts for students, who are then better prepared to participate in interpretive discussion.

Gordon describes interpretive discussion in terms of arriving at an interpretation of a text by identifying its assumptions, exploring how it draws our interest, and questioning its meaning. Fusing Socratic Method with reader response theory of interpretation, Gordon writes:

> Understanding the meaning of a text involves making an interpretation of it and that an interpretation is a 'translation.' Interpreters, as translators, do not reproduce the original text but instead present it as they understand it to themselves and others. That is, they try to say, in their own words, what the text says. The interpretation will depend not only on what is given in the text but also on the *terms and concepts that an interpreter uses in trying to say what it says*. Emphasis added. (Gordon 3)

By furnishing a range of 'interpretations' of an idea in the form of literary, Judaic, biblical and philosophical texts, we supply terms and concepts that enable students to ask and answer probing questions of a given text. Gordon distinguishes three phases of interpretive discussion: preparation, leading the discussion and reflection. During the first phase we identify texts relevant to our topic and generate what Gordon calls "cluster[s] of questions" (5) to pose to our students. We distinguish among "factual," "interpretive" and "evaluative questions" (5), for each text, focusing on "the deepest point of doubt about the meaning of a text" (6).Difficult questions, such as why is slavery explained and condoned in the Torah, open up new perspectives on the Torah's historicity and resignation to realities of its contemporaneous culture.

Leading the discussion (phase two) is somewhat dependent on students' comfort with speaking their minds. We have tried to balance the inevitable minority of loud and assertive participants with the often quiet majority, who are content to take notes or just listen to animated discussion. Nonetheless, we vigorously attempt to take Socrates' advice in "The Allegory of the Cave" (Plato's *Republic* Book 7): We do not seek to "put into the soul[s of our students] knowledge that isn't in [them], as though [we] were putting sight into blind eyes . . . but [recognize] that this power is in the soul of each, and that the instrument with which each learns . . . must be *turned* around" (Quoted in Gordon 10. Emphasis added.). Turning students' souls takes time and patience,

for them and for us. Teachers and students of interpretive discussion must accept the fact that such turning, constantly questioning participants to help them form and clarify their ideas and test their assumptions, may not occur in one or two forty-five minute class periods. This is why we continually use Gordon's third phase, reflection, to evaluate the class's participation in general (what Gordon refers to as "building a community of learners") and the discussion's achievements in terms of its content (12). We also evaluate the students' tolerance of others' perspectives, and their ability to listen to each other with respect and understanding.

Still, possibly the most significant element of our hybrid teaching method is our constant modeling of interpolation and integration. We continually point out connections, similarities, parallels and contrasts between and among discipline-specific texts. For instance, as one of us is explaining a philosophical point, the other will suggest a literary proof text, analog or contradictory example of that point. We spend at least six of our seven weekly periods teaching by example how to integrate texts from different disciplines. We have found that this is the most effective method of tearing down students' "mental *mechitzot*" between Judaic and general studies. It takes some time to undo over a decade of learning, but by the end of the course, students invariably announce that Tikvah has been the most important class they have ever taken, and often, that it has changed their lives.

Written Models of Integration

We have implemented a three-step process of written textual integration through teaching students how to write three types of essays. For each paper they must submit a thesis that argues a position, along with three topic sentences that trace the paper's lines of analysis and argument. In the first type of paper, a single source is used to better understand another. For example, in an essay on slavery in *Huck Finn*, one student applied Aristotle's definition of slavery to Jim, writing:

> [In Aristotle's *Politics* regarding those who are born to be slaves] he states that not only is it "rational" for a slave to be enslaved, but even if he does not have a master, he is still a slave, for it is in his nature. This quality is evident in Jim's attitude toward Huck and Tom, and how he constantly feels as though he is under another's control, even after he runs away from his master. For example, when the two twelve year-old boys tell Jim their plan to liberate him, "he couldn't make no sense in most of it, but he allowed [they] was white folks and knowed better than him" (Twain Chapter 36). It is clearly in Jim's nature to be inferior to and serve others. That quality alone is what binds him to eternal slavery. Therefore, since Jim was born with the physique and nature of a slave, according to Aristotle, his appropriate state is enslavement, a state he cannot escape.

Notice here the seamless application of Aristotle's theory of slavery to Jim's behavior and circumstance. This integration of literature and philosophy indicates that the student has achieved not only an enhanced understanding of Jim because of Aristotle's theory of slavery, but also a rich appreciation of slavery itself.

In the second type of paper, students write compare/contrast essays that engage sources in dialogue with each other. In an essay that explored the responsibilities and repercussions of parenting in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, for instance, a student compared Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's "Kibbud u-Mora: The Honor and Fear of Parents," to one family in the novel, examining the ways in which the Rav's "pragmatic," "ethical" and "ontic" methods of honoring a parent are absent or perverted in Anderson's text. She began: "To better understand where Seth's parental relationships failed, it is useful to examine models of ideal parent-child relations. In 'Kibbud u-Mora: The Honor and Fear of Parents,' Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik offers a recipe for

successful parent-child bonds." Here, the source material conflicts with the literary text, but by engaging the two disparate presentations of parent-child relations, the student arrived at a new understanding of exactly why Anderson's family relationships fail.

For the third and most sophisticated type of paper, students must make a philosophical point using sources from multiple disciplines. Our sample student essay in this category explores the topic of tradition and modernity in terms of Rav Soloveitchik's Adam I and Adam II typologies set out in *The Lonely Man of Faith* as they apply to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*: The paper's thesis is "Hester Prynne embodies Rabbi Soloveitchik's Adam 1 as the archetype for modernity, while Dimmesdale represents Adam 2, the more traditional first man. Isolated, neither Hester/Adam 1 nor Dimmesdale/Adam 2 is ideal; the two complement each other, proving that modernity and tradition must, too, coexist." This essay's philosophical point extends to Dimmesdale's and Hester's illegitimate daughter Pearl, who, as the embodiment of the unity of tradition and modernity, is the only character who can leave the oppressive Puritan society. The paper concludes: "Modernity for Hawthorne moves on from the religious; modernity and action for Soloveitchik allows room for tradition to seep in as well. The Rav's modernity is an organic one, stemming from tradition. Hawthorne's is murkier. Hawthorne does not guide, he simply depicts the tragic scenario that could occur if only one extreme is followed."

This essay reflects the advanced level of thinking that the Tikvah class seeks to foster, and is itself a text worthy of interpretive discussion.

Tikvah's Impact on School Culture

The impact of this class on the school's culture cannot be overstated. Not only has it elevated the status and discourse of those in the course, but it has raised the status of intellectual discourse

in the school community. Philosophical debate is now cool. Heated classroom discussions about natural law versus social contract theory overflow into the corridors. To be sure, while the class culture values thinking and asking questions about universal issues, there is the potential for problems of elitism. However, we believe that these are mitigated by the difficulty of the course; A's are rare, keeping egos in check. The fact that we are (to our knowledge) the only Jewish high school offering such an advanced and demanding class has also elevated the school's profile in the greater community.

The young woman quoted at the beginning of this article described the course's effects this way: "The philosophers are no longer esoteric--they become your friends, your advisors, and their faces replace the boy band posters previously on your bedroom walls. We took something that felt so scary, so impossibly difficult, and made it so accessible that it became an integral part of my life. That was my favorite thing about Tikvah. A class that actually impacted the way I think! Even more so, who I am!" This kind of impact on students reverberates throughout our community, and animates the integration of Jewish and Western thought.

Fortunately, what happens in Tikvah might stay there during the academic year, but what happens in Tikvah also stays with its graduates, and we hope, turns their souls toward the light.

Works Cited

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Gordon, Sophie Haroutunian. *Learning to Teach through Discussion: The Art of Turning the Soul.* New Haven: Yale U. P., 2009. Print.

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Appendix

Date	Topics and Essential Questions	Readings
Aug. 28-Sept 17 (Extended Wiki due Sept 10; Paper Due Oct. 4)	**Beginnings: Man's Relation to Nature** ● What is the Native American perspective on man's place in the world? ● What is the colonial perspective on man's place in the world? ● What are some Jewish philosophical positions on man's place in the world? ● What are the perspectives of the poems "Huswifery" and "Skyloom" on man's place in the world? Paper topic: Compare any two perspectives on the purpose of man's place in the world.	● **Native American origin myths** ● **1624 "A General History of Virginia," Smith** ● **1630 "Of Plymouth Plantation," Bradford** ● **1630 "Sermon on the Arabella," Winthrop** ● **c. 1700 "Huswifery," Taylor** ● **"Song of the Skyloom," Tewa Tribe** ● **1775 Speech to VA Conv., Henry** ● **1776 The Crisis #1, Paine** ● **1782 Letters from an American Farmer, Crevacoeur** ● *Genesis* 1-2 ● *Beliefs and Opinions*, Saadya Gaon ● *Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides ● *Tiferet Yisrael,* Maharal (excerpts) ● *The Lonely Man of Faith; Majesty and Humility; Halakhic Man, R'* JB Soloveitchik, (excerpts)
Sept.30-Oct. 18	**Punishment**	

(Paper Due Oct. 21)	• What is the justification for meting out punishment? • Based on what theory of punishment does a given punishment (in one of the texts) fit the crime. • How can an individual's punishment transform a community? Paper topic: "How can at least two theories of punishment we've studied inform your understanding of particular scenes in 'The Scarlet Letter?'	• ***1850 The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne (READ OVER SUKKOT)** • **1733-58 Puritan work ethic, Ben Franklin's *Autobiography* (excerpts), 1790 and Poor Richard's Almanac 1733** • *Bereishit* 9, Radak • *Vayikra* 24 • *Bamidbar* 35 • *Devarim* 13 21, Ramban • Bavli *Makkot* 2a • Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, *Guide for the Perplexed* • *Protagoras*, Plato (excerpts) • *Philosophy of Law*, Kant • *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* Hume
Oct. 21-Nov. 14 (Papers Due Nov. 14) Visiting Scholars: Professor Jonathan Yonan, Professor RJ Snell	**Slavery** • Can physical slavery be reconciled with an ideal world? • How does natural law theory reconcile physical servitude? • How is social contract theory used to justify slavery? • In what ways can one be enslaved? • To what extent is slavery a matter of perspective? Paper topic: In what ways are the novel's characters enslaved and/or free?	• ***1887 Huckleberry Finn*, Twain** • John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (Excerpts) • *Declaration of Independence* • J. J. Rousseau, *Social Contract* (Excerpts) • Rawls, (Excerpts) • Lincoln, Fragment on Slavery nps.gov July 1 1854 • *Crido*, Plato, (Excerpt) • *The Politics*, Aristotle, (Excerpts) • *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky, (Excerpts) • Exodus 14, 21 • Leviticus 25 • Deuteronomy 14 • *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides, (Excerpts) • *Avadim*, Rubinstein (Excerpts) • *Iggerot Ha-Ra'ayah*, Kook (Excerpt) • *Celebration of the Soul*, Kook (excerpt)
BEGIN Q2 Nov. 18-Nov. 27 (Debate on Dec 12)	**The Relationship between the Individual and the Community** • What are the responsibilities of the individual to the community? • What are the responsibilities of the community to the individual? • What is society for?	• **1855 "I Hear America Singing," "Song of Myself," Whitman** • **1841 *Self-Reliance,* Emerson** • **1854 Thoreau, excerpts: *Walden*; *Civil Disobedience*** • **1894 "The Story of an Hour," Chopin** • *Deuteronomy* 21 • *Exodus* 25 • *Politics*, Aristotle (excerpts) • *The Social Contract*, Rousseau

		(excerpt) ● *The Leviathan*, Hobbes (excerpt) ● "Lonely Man of Faith;" "The Community," R' JB Soloveitchik ● *On Liberty*, Mill (excerpts) ● *Philosophy of Right,* Hegel
Dec.2-Dec.24 (Paper Due Jan. 6)	**Filial Responsibility** ● What compels parents to expect treatment from their children that they don't expect from strangers? ● What are children's obligations to bad parents? ● What are the obligations of grown children to their parents? Paper topic: Explore the symbolism of roots and rootlessness in *Winesburg, Ohio* and in RJBS.	● ***1919 Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson** ● *Exodus* 12 ● *Exodus* 20 ● *Leviticus* 19 ● *Kidushin* (excerpts) ● *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam (excerpts) ● *Shulchan Aruch*, (excerpts) ● *Kibbud u-Mora,* R' JB Soloveitchik ● "The Old Grandfather and His Little Grandson," Tolstoy
Jan 2-10	**Predictability & Unpredictability The Ability to Change One's Circumstance** ● By what means can one, rightly or wrongly, work to improve his or her future? ● In what ways do characters in LDJ cope with the unpredictability of life, why do they fail?	● ***1941 Long Day's Journey into Night*, O'Neil (READ OVER BREAK)** ● **1904 "The Sculptor's Funeral," Cather** ● *Exodus* 15 ● *Esther Rabba*, 8 ● *Devarim* ● *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam (excerpts)
Jan 14, 15, 16	Midterm Question: What factors compel an individual to march to the beat of his own drummer? Short essay: In LDJ, by what means does each character try to improve the liveability of his or her life, and why does this fail?	
Jan 21-Feb 14 (Paper Due Feb 24)	**Gratitude and Affluence** ● What is the stimulus for gratitude? ● Does gratitude need to be	● **1922 "America and I," Yezierska** ● **1925 *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald (READ OVER BREAK Jan 17-20)** ● *Avos* (excerpt)

Visiting Scholar and Mishmar Program with, Dr. David Pelcovitz--Feb 13	expressed? ● Why are the rich different from those with lesser means? ● How does the absence of philanthropy impact the individual and society? ● How should one prioritize his or her charitable giving? Paper Topic: In what ways did a character from *The Great Gatsby* fail to live up to the responsibilities of affluence?	● *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas (excerpts) ● *Two Treatises*, Locke (excerpts) ● "What Is Property?," Proudhon ● *Deuteronomy* 15 ● *Baba Basra* (excerpts) ● *Mishne Torah*, Rambam (excerpts) ● *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel (excerpt) ● *Baba Kama* (excerpts) ● *Noda Biy'huda* 54, Landau ● *Sanhedrin* (excerpt) ● *Vayikra Raba* (excerpt) ● *Aruch Hashulchan*, Epstein (exerpt) ● *Igros Moshe*, Feinstein (excerpt) ● *Bleak House*, Dickens (excerpt)
Feb 18-28 (Spoken Word Assessment on March 10)	**The Definition of Success and The American Dream** ● What makes a life successful? ● To what extent does society determine success or failure? ● Who is a "hero"? ● How does success relate to dignity? ● What is the American Dream? What is the Jewish approach to the American dream? ● What is the Jewish conception of the "good life"? Paper Topic: Is striving for the American Dream consistent with the philosophical contentions of these texts? How?	● ***1947 Death of a Salesman***, Miller [READ Feb. 14-17] ● *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl [READ over summer] ● *Deuteronomy* 11,28 ● *Genesis* 10-12 ● *Orot*, Kook (excerpt) ● *Orot HaTorah*, Kook (excerpt) ● *HaKuzari*, Halevi (excerpt) ● *V'Eyrastich Li L'olam*, Sherlo (excerpt)
March 3-21 (Paper Due March 31)	**Free Will, Fate and Destiny; Responses to Suffering** ● Are aspects of our lives predetermined by biology, race, society, or other factors, or are we completely free to do as we choose? ● To what extent do social pressures determine one's fate? ● Does belief in free will conflict with belief in God's omniscience? ● What is the difference between fate and destiny, and how does Judaism account for them?	● ***1960 To Kill a Mockingbird***, Lee [READ Feb. 24-Mar. 9] ● **1941** "**A Worn Path**," Welty ● *Fate and Destiny*, JB Soloveitchik **[READ Feb. 18-23]** ● **1824 "The Devil and Tom Walker," Irving** ● **1936 "The Devil and Daniel Webster," Benet** ● **1839 "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe** ● M'nachos (excerpt) ● Eikha (excerpt) ● *Out of the Whirlwind*, R' JB Soloveitchik ● Yehezkel 18 (Excerpt)

	• How do we respond when good people suffer? • How can a good G-d be responsible for suffering? • How have classical Jewish texts responded to the problem of evil? Paper Topic: Can one escape one's fate? Support your answer from *TKM* or other philosophical works.	• Yirmiyahu 31 (Excerpt) • Devarim 7 (Excerpt) with Targum • *Sanhedrin* (excerpt) • *Moreh N'vuchim*, Rambam (excerpt) • *Hilkhot Teshuva*, Rambam (excerpt) • *Drugstore Athlete*, Gladwell • "Judaism, Free Will, and the Genetic and Neuroscientific Revolutions," Shatz
March 24-April 10 (Paper Due April 28) (Visiting Scholar, R' Yaakov Bieler, April 29)	**Particularism** • How do Jews relate to the "Other"? • Does the conception of "the Chosen People" imply racism? • How should a majority culture treat a minority? • How do we account for *halakhot* that discriminate based on religion? Paper Topic: Trace the changes in Bok's attitude toward chosenness and explain how Yaakov would respond to some of the rabbinic sources.	• **1966 *The Fixer*, Malamud (READ Mar. 10-21)** • *Bereishit 12, Shemot 19, D'varim 7* • *Kuzari*, Halevi (excerpts) • "Epistle to Yemen," Maimonides • Avoda Zara 26a • *Be'er Hagolah*, Maharal • "Locusts, Giraffes, and the Meaning of Kashrut," M. Soloveichik • "Symposium on Chosenness," Lamm, M. Lichtenstein, Eisen • *A Letter in the Scroll,* Sacks (excerpts)
April 24-May 16 (Paper Due May 27) Trip on May 23	**Judaism's Encounter with the Secular** • What does Judaism value in the secular world? • What criteria are necessary to determine the value of something secular? Paper Topic: What value does Judaism place on the secular? Use examples from *Asher Lev* to support your position.	• **1972 *My Name Is Asher Lev*, Potok** • Chagiga 3b • Eruvin 13b • Y'vamos 14a • "Confrontation," R' JB Soloveitchik • "Legitimization of Modernity: Classical and Contemporary," Lichtenstein
May 19-30 Essay on Final	**Tradition and Modernity** • What impositions does tradition make on a modern life? • What does a modern life stand to gain from tradition? • Do tradition and modernity	• **1953"The Magic Barrel," Malamud** • **1955"Angel Levine," Malamud** • **1963 "The Jewbird," Malamud** • **1973 "Everyday Use," Walker** • **1989 "Rules of the Game," Tan** • *Apology*, Plato • *First Discourse*, Rousseau

	necessarily cause some degree of conflict? ● Is balance achievable? Desirable?	● *Hullin* 90b ● *Sh'mos Raba* 3 ● *Sefer HaChinuch* 495 ● *Responsa Hatam Sofer* (OH) 1:308 ● *Responsa Sridei Eish 2:59* ● *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer, section 5* ● "Da'at Torah," Lichtenstein ● "Rupture & Reconstruction," H. Solovetchik
June 2-3	**Review and Synthesis**	●

Course Bibliography

American Literature Texts:

Short Stories: "The Devil and Tom Walker," Irving "The Devil and Daniel Webster," Benet "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe "The Story of an Hour," Chopin "Rules of the Game," Tan "Everyday Use," Walker "America and I," Yezierska "The Jewbird," Malamud "The Magic Barrel," Malamud "Angel Levine," Malamud "The Sculptor's Funeral," Cather "A Worn Path," Welty	**Novels:** *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson *My Name Is Asher Lev*, Potok *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee *The Fixer*, Malamud **Plays:** *Long Day's Journey into Night,* O'Neill *Death of a Salesman*, Miller
Poetry and American Literature Survey: *The American Experience*, Prentice Hall Native American Literature Early Puritan and Colonial Literature Romanticism Transcendentalism Walt Whitman Modernism Post-Modernism	***Vocabulary Workshop*:** Level G **SAT Preparation:** *The New SAT Critical Reading Workbook*, Kaplan *The Official SAT Study Guide*, The College Board **Writing Tools:** *The Elements of Style*, Strunk and White

Legal Works

Ancient and Medieval: *Tanakh* *Sh'mos Raba* *Vayikra Raba* *B'midbar Raba* *Esther Raba* *Sifra* *Zohar* *Talmud Bavli* *Talmud Yerushalmi* *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam *Sefer HaChinuch*	**Modern:** *Shulchan Aruch* *Eliyahu Raba* *Aruch Hashulchan*, Epstein *Responsa Noda Biy'huda*, Landau *Responsa Hatam Sofer*, Sofer *Responsa Sridei Eish*, Weinberg *Responsa Igros Moshe*, Feinstein *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer,* Waldenberg *Kadmoniot Hahalacha*

Philosophical Works

Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern *Lamentations* *Proverbs* *Psalms*	**Modern:** "Fragment on Slavery," Lincoln *Orot HaTorah*, Kook *IThe Lonely Man of Faith*, J.B. Soloveitchik

Micah *Euthyphro*, Plato *Crido, Plato* *Apology, Plato* *Protagoras*, Plato *Politics*, Aristotle *HaKuzari*, Halevi *Moreh N'vuchim*, Rambam *Epistle to Yemen,* Maimonides *D'rashot HaRa"n*, Gerondi *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas Tiferet Yisrael, Maharal *Be'er Hagola*, Maharal *The Leviathan*, Hobbes *Two Treatises*, Locke *The Social Contract*, Rousseau *First Discourse*, Rousseau *Philosophy of Law*, Kant *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* Hume *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel **Other Literature:** *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky "The Old Grandfather and His Little Grandson," Tolstoy *Bleak House*, Dickens *Drugstore Athlete*, Gladwell	*Majesty and Humility,* J.B. Soloveitchik "The Community," J.B. Soloveitchik *Kibbud u-Mora*, JB Soloveitchik *Out of the Whirlwind*, J.B. Soloveitchik *Fate and Destiny*, JB Soloveitchik *Halakhic Man*, JB Soloveitchik *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl "Redemption and the Power of Man," Meir Soloveichik "God's Beloved: A Defense of Chosenness," Meir Soloveichik "Locusts, Giraffes, and the Meaning of Kashrut," M. Soloveichik "Symposium on Chosenness," Lamm, M. Lichtenstein *A Letter in the Scroll,* Sacks "What Is Property?," Proudhon *ggerot HaRa'ayah*, Kook *Orot*, Kook *Celebration of the Soul*, Kook *V'erastich Li L'olam*, Sherlo\ "Judaism, Free Will, and the Genetic and Neuroscientific Revolutions," Shatz "Da'at Torah," Lichtenstein "Legitimization of Modernity: Classical and Contemporary," Lichtenstein