



Middle School Program of Studies

2024.25

Mission

SDJA empowers each student to learn for life, guided by Jewish values, and rooted in strength of community.

Accreditation

San Diego Jewish Academy (“SDJA”) is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). In 2021, SDJA received a seven-year accreditation status, the highest awarded by WASC/CAIS.

Introduction to the Middle School Program of Studies

The SDJA Program of Studies document is intended to be a guide for parents and students to prepare for the 2024-25 school year. Please read the program information carefully and discuss potential course options, as a family.

Course Registration

In the weeks leading up to the 2024-25 registration period, there will be dedicated time during advisory and specific grade level academic sessions for students to dialogue with teachers, department chairpersons and administrators. The schedule for the advisory aspect of course registration is communicated via email and placed in the SDJA *Happenings* newsletter.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93.00 to 100.00	C	74.00 to 76.99
A-	90.00 to 92.99	C-	70.00 to 73.99
B+	87.00 to 89.99	D+	67.00 to 69.99
B	84.00 to 86.99	D	64.00 to 66.99
B-	80.00 to 83.99	D-	60.00 to 63.99
C+	77.00 to 79.99	F	00.00 to 59.99

Homework

The intent of homework in middle school is for our students to grow as independent learners who are reflective and inspired to delve deeper into the content of their academic program. By independently completing work outside of class, SDJA students further explore and enhance specific concepts and skills, reinforce the lessons taught in class, and prepare for upcoming class time and assignments.

In middle school, the amount of work outside of class varies with the academic program of each student. We believe student learning is supported by the interaction between the student, the teacher, and the parent/guardian. Therefore, it is highly recommended that parents/guardians and students communicate regularly with teachers in order to best support the learning process. Homework is posted on Canvas, our online Learning Management System (LMS).

Grades & Transcripts

Students' grades are continually reviewable via Canvas. Transcripts are sent home twice per year, at the end of semester 1 in January, and at the end of semester 2, in June. Transcripts are also available by request. Semester grades given in January and June are used to compute a student's grade point average and become part of the student's academic record.

Conferences

Another important aspect of our middle school program are our middle school conferences. Conferences will take place for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. During the 2024-25 school year, there will be three opportunities for you to engage with your child and our middle school faculty, on your child's experiences in the middle school:

- In the Fall, your child will plan and facilitate a "Lion Led Conference", where they will share their sources of pride, describe areas of improvement, and design action planning steps for the school year.
- In the Winter, you will have an opportunity to have academic conferences with each of your child's teachers to learn more about their content acquisition, skills development, and engagement in class.
- In the Spring, your child will engage in a reflective learning experience where they present their growth with notable pieces of academic work.

Final Exam Make Up Policy (8th Grade only)

There is one make-up period for final exams. The schedule for make-up exams will be coordinated by the Dean of Academics. It is the responsibility of the student to take the missed final exam during this period. If the exam is not taken during the make-up period, the final semester grade will be determined by averaging an "F" (0%) for that final exam.

Absences and Missing Coursework

Class attendance and participation are significant components of the learning process. The Maimonides Upper School at SDJA is a classroom and campus-centric educational program, which requires our students to be present - both physically and mentally. Coming to school well-rested, properly nourished, prepared for course-work, and with a positive desire to be an active learner and engaged member of the school community, are the ingredients for flourishing.

Submitting Late Work

When a student is absent from class for any reason or does not turn in assigned work on the due date, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate a conversation with their teacher about completing missed coursework. If a student has been absent, this conversation should occur on the first day back to campus regardless of whether the course meets that day. Late work will be accepted and graded based on the guideline designed by the teacher.

In middle school, it is expected that students are actively engaged in their academic program. Being aware of, planning for, completion of and delivery to the teacher of all coursework (e.g., homework, tests and projects) is the responsibility of the student. The learning management system, Canvas, and meeting with teachers during Pod are two important resources that students can use to help them succeed in this aspect of their learning.

Tests Missed Due to Absence

Make-up tests will be administered to upper school students in the testing center during Pod. Makeup tests take precedence over co-curricular programs; e.g., athletic practices and contests.

Full Day Absence: When a student misses sitting for a test due to being absent from school for an entire day, the student will have the same number of calendar days as they were absent to make up a test. For example, if a student misses a test on a Monday due to a full day absence and is back in school on Tuesday, the test will be administered on Tuesday regardless if it is an “A” or “B” day. If the test is not made up within this timeframe, the grade earned may be lowered by 10%. Students who neglect to make up the test within three (3) days will also meet with the Dean of Academics, along with their parents/guardians, to discuss the student’s engagement with their academic program. In the event that a student returns to school after an absence and is scheduled to sit for multiple tests on the same day, a schedule will be designed so all assessments can be tended to in a reasonable and healthy manner.

Partial Day Absence: If a student misses only the period a test is being administered, the test must be made up before the end of that same school day. If the test is not made up within this timeframe, the grade earned will be lowered by 10%. Students who neglect to make up the test within three (3) days will also meet with the Dean of Academics, along with their parents/guardians, to discuss the student’s engagement with their academic program.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Platforms Policy

The parameters for when and how students can use generative AI platforms will be determined and communicated by the teacher (both in the assignment directions posted in Canvas, and verbally during class).

If students are permitted to use generative AI platforms, students must provide a citation for the source of information they collected. Referenced material in student work products must be cited in MLA format like any other source at SDJA, including the prompt used in the generative AI platform, e.g. (ChatGPT, *prompt used*, date).

Students' use of generative AI platforms without permission from the teacher and or without citing appropriately is a violation of SDJA's academic integrity policy.

Guidance for Students

- Generative AI platforms are powerful tools that can help students with ideation, organization, and research.
- AI is an emerging technology that students should strive to master.
- Dedicating substantial time to the design and iteration of your prompt will aid in the sophistication of AI platform products and enhance your learning.
- Although there is quite a bit that generative AI platforms can do, there are inherent risks in relying on the product produced. Be sure to check generative AI products for accuracy, bias, and the platform's citations. Students should be prepared to explain why they believe the information is accurate or not.
- All assignments must be completed by the student and represent the student's own original work and understanding of the material.
- Students must not use generative AI platforms to plagiarize. This includes copying and pasting text from AI-generated sources without proper attribution, as well as using AI tools to generate answers to assignments that are not their own original work.
- Students must engage with the material in a meaningful way and only use AI tools as a supplement to their own understanding, and to ensure deep understanding of the material.

Guidance for Faculty

- Faculty have a responsibility to set clear guidelines for students around using generative AI platforms. Because generative AI is so new and so powerful, clarity is crucial in helping students know what is honest use and what is not.
- Being transparent with students about the purpose of an assignment can help students appreciate what they are learning, the importance of the skills they are developing, and the excitement of creating their own ideas. Consider discussing with students the ways that having core knowledge in a field makes their use of generative AI platforms more powerful, so they understand the value of that learning even with access to these tools.
- Review assignments to incorporate check-ins of the student writing pieces.

- Utilize safe browsers or locked browsers for assessments.
- Utilize a multi-step check in process to monitor how students are working towards developing a final work product to determine at which points students might be accessing AI platforms(s). Encourage/assign student self-reflection throughout this process (this can be an oral confirmation check-in). In these discussions, which may last as little as five to ten minutes, faculty ask students about their ideas and process, probing beyond submitted materials.
- Encourage students to read the permitted generative AI platforms, privacy policy and terms of use.

Athletics & Physical Education

The San Diego Jewish Academy Athletic Department provides students the opportunities to learn and embody life lessons through participation in interscholastic sports. We support our students, coaches and teachers in creating experiences that will help to develop character traits such as commitment, a growth mindset and teamwork.

PE

With specific regard to the physical education program in the middle school our vision at SDJA is to provide students with the education and tools to live an active healthy lifestyle. This includes but is not limited to classroom instruction on nutrition, strength and conditioning activities in the weight room as well as the teaching of both traditional and non-traditional physical education games.

Interscholastic Sports

Fall

Volleyball
Flag Football -Coed
Boys & Girls Cross Country

Winter

Boys Basketball
Girls Soccer
Boys Soccer
Sideline Cheer

Spring

Co-Ed Tennis
Girls Basketball
Baseball
Boys & Girls Track & Field

Independent Study PE (ISPE)

We recognize that some students pursue athletics and other competitive activities at a high competitive level and to accommodate and support those students, SDJA offers ISPE as a way to earn athletic credit. The ISPE program at SDJA is designed with two goals in mind:

1. To provide exceptionally gifted athletes who compete at a high regional or national level an opportunity to earn SDJA athletic credit while pursuing their sport off campus.
2. To provide students who are pursuing an in-depth study of an athletic or competitive dance discipline not offered as part of the SDJA curriculum an opportunity to earn athletic credit.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM & COURSE OFFERINGS

Middle School Elective Quarterly Rotation Information

We will utilize a quarter system for our middle school electives, with 4 rotations in the 2024-25 school year. We offer students an opportunity to practice a new skill, follow an engaging interest and explore a new subject area. Students will have the opportunity to rank their elective preferences before each elective rotation. Some of the elective opportunities we offer are Visual Art, Poetry, Make It, Robotics, Rocketry, Speech & Debate, Music, Stages, Sports Leadership, and more! As you view the Middle School Program of Studies, please note our possible middle school elective offerings for the 2024-25 school year, within each department.

Elective Registration

Students will have the opportunity to register for elective courses prior to each rotation. The academic department will facilitate the elective course registration process. Prior to each rotation, each middle school student will receive an email from the academic department with instructions, the link for Elective Course Registration, and the Middle School Elective Program of Studies. Elective course registration for the first rotation of the 2024-25 school year will take place the week before school begins. Students will be notified of their first rotation elective class the day before school begins, and will attend their elective on our first day of school!

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Visual and Performing Arts Department Philosophy: In the Visual and Performing Arts classroom, we focus on developing creativity through engagement, trial and error, practice, and expression in the form of presentation and performance. The purpose of the Visual and Performing Arts Department is to provide a safe and nurturing environment of artistic skill development, practice, creativity, and performance for developing artists and to give all students the opportunity to expand their awareness and appreciation of the arts.

Art

In the middle school art elective rotations, students experience a hands-on opportunity to learn new techniques or build new skills through creative practice. Each rotation offers an opportunity to explore a new medium. Examples of classes offered include ceramics- handbuilding, visual art, digital art or other topics based on student interest.

Beginning Middle School Music

This active and engaging course is designed for students who want to learn to play the flute, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, bass, guitar, or drums. More experienced instrumental students who would like to mentor and lead groups within this class are also encouraged to enroll. Areas of focus will include the learning of standard musical notation related to the repertoire, participation in historical/cultural lessons related to music, and group performance skills. Students taking this class are expected to have a regular practice routine and participate in an end of year concert. The school has a

limited number of instruments for students to use; students are encouraged to rent or supply their own instruments.

Intermediate/Advanced Music

Prerequisite: Participation in at least 2 music rotations in the past (this year, or past years) or a demonstrated ability in the fundamentals of music and a basic level of playing on an instrument.

This course is designed for music students who have some prior experience playing an instrument and reading music. Students practice and develop skills on a stringed, wind, guitar, or percussion instrument through the study and performance of songs designed to improve group dynamics. Students also read music notation relevant to the applied literature, listen to/analyze/describe music, learn the historical and cultural attributes of music relevant to the course, and critically examine selections of music from various genres. We will also have opportunities to perform in small concerts or school events!

Stages

This course will provide middle school students an opportunity to study the art of theater - including theater history, acting, production techniques and technical design through improvisation, stage movement, voice/diction, and creating a character. The course will be taught in 4 separate rotations that each address a different aspect of the theater:

- 1) Production Prep (different show each year)
- 2) Production (some students will be two rotations, some will be the second only)
- 3) Technical Theatre (sound/Lights)
- 4) Wild Card (Different selection each year)

Each class also includes theater games, storytelling and FUN. No experience required, all skill levels are welcome and encouraged to enroll in this course. There will be opportunities to be on stage or behind the scenes with a performance for school and community. This is a space for creative thinkers to explore, share and grow together.

CENTER FOR INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING (CIET)

CIET Philosophy: CIET develops curious students who can adapt to a rapidly changing society through deepening the awareness of personal identities and strengths and constructing a culture of empowering opportunities and challenges.

Robotics for Rookies

Do you like making things move? Do you enjoy designing things that haven't been created before? Do you like working on a team and sharing ideas? Then this is the class for you! In this robotics elective, no previous experience is necessary! All you need is your imagination and excitement. Students who take this class will learn how to design, build and code robots for land and water. You will learn technology skills like coding, website building and video making. You will also learn engineering skills like soldering, water-proofing, circuitry, drilling and more! Are you ready to start building?

Design Thinking

Empathize, define, ideate, prototype, test, iterate and implement! These are the basic fundamentals of design thinking and they can be applied to all types of problems. We will spend time looking at challenges or problems that occur in everyday life and then use a host of tools to address them. This course is for anyone interested in problem solving, prototyping, engineering and creativity! Activities may include anything from trying to design a more inclusive city landscape to building a functional rocket and many other problems we would like to solve.

Rocketry & Technology

In this elective class, we will spend most of our time designing, building, and launching rockets! In between builds we will tap into our creativity by observing and studying new technologies. How does our environment influence our engineering ideas? What is the human race currently working on that can inspire us and our designs? By observing and following emerging technology, we will be inspired and find innovative ideas to incorporate into our builds!

HUMANITIES

Humanities Department Philosophy: We teach and study the Humanities because we value the continued practice of deep thought about what it means to be human in terms of both the individual experience and the collective one. The goal of our English classes at SDJA is to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills so students can ultimately communicate with an articulate and confident voice, both written and oral, who we are and where our responsibilities lie. The goal of our history classes at SDJA is to empower students to make sense of our world today through a broad study of the past. The study of history and social sciences develops students to be inquiring, knowledgeable and informed young adults who are critical thinkers, critical readers, and effective communicators. English texts complement the historical units. As a whole, our humanities classes provide continuing conversations and writing about what it means to be human in an ever changing world.

Humanities: Required Middle School Courses

6th Grade Humanities (English 6 and History 6)

These two courses are designed to build reading, writing, and thinking skills while giving students a well-rounded understanding of the origins and relevance of Western ancient civilizations and their impact on our present culture. In addition to improving the comprehension and decoding skills which students have acquired in earlier grades, we will coach them in the habits of effective readers, which include questioning, making inferences, making connections with previous knowledge, using multi-sensory imaging, and summarizing. The literature we study will, in part, support the history and, in part, be selected for the development of language skills. Students will learn organizational techniques and practice group work to engage with the material while exploring the theme “Where do we come from?”

7th Grade Humanities (English 7 and History 7)

These two courses strive to explore the question, “How do we see?” as students develop fluency as critical thinkers, readers, and writers while examining social, cultural, religious and technological change in literature and throughout the world, including Europe, Asia, Africa and the Civilizations of the Americas. We will mine historical, literary and personal experiences, shaping our perspectives into organized narratives and evidence-based responses exacted through sensory details, strong word choice, and conventions that best serve the writing. Comprehension skills will continue to develop as readers focus on how characters’ perceive the world and how that perception impacts their reality and the conflicts they set out to resolve. Students will gain a sense of perspective and recognize the myriad experiences of characters and peoples across cultures and time.

8th Grade Humanities (English 8 and History 8)

These two courses prepare students for responsible citizenship by developing their understanding of the human struggle toward freedom and equality in America as they seek to answer the question, “How do we become?” History 8 presents an in-depth study of American government, history and politics. The course focuses on presenting an introduction to constitutional, historical, governmental, political, social, and economic structures and processes. Beginning with early colonial governments, this course traces the historical events leading to the formation of the American Constitution and continues through to the current politics of domestic and economic policymaking and examines America’s place in the world. In English 8, multicultural literature, book club selections, and non-fiction pieces from a range of genres provide entry points for authentic response, evidence-based analysis, thesis-driven essays, and models of effective writing from which students practice and make intentional choices about the organization, craft, and effectual use of conventions in their own composition. Students will delve into literary elements, noticing how those elements impact craft, character, theme, and story arc while also practicing these elements in their own writing. Through their vicarious experience of literary characters and various peoples in American history, students learn to express empathy, explore choices and consequences and generate their own voice in ways that help build a more confident sense of self as active members of society.

Humanities: Elective Courses

Creative Writing: Poetry Plunge

Are you a poet? Maybe you are, and you just don’t know it! In this class, blooming poets will plunge into poetry invitations that tickle the imagination and harken personal experience. We’ll explore how poets use words and structure to best convey their message while experimenting with different kinds of inspiration, from experiential opportunities like nature walks to found poetry to slam poetry while also writing under the influence of powerful poetry. The goal is to play with words and write poetry that helps us find our voice in this wide world. No experience with poetry necessary and, if you’ve taken poetry before, new adventures will await you. Members of this writing

community will keep a poet's notebook, provide feedback to fellow poets, have ample opportunities to share writing, and create a personal anthology of poetry.

Fiber Arts: Stitches and Stories

Ever wanted to crochet a scarf? Or, maybe you've felt the urge to embroider an emu while sitting in a circle, sharing life stories. In this course, you'll start with embroidery, learning some of the basic stitches by creating a stitch sampler. Once you've got the hang of the basic stitches, you'll create your own, self-selected embroidery project. After a lap of embroidery, we'll set our sights on crochet where you'll learn three basic stitches that will allow you to crochet in rows (think scarf or laptop cover) or rounds (beanies or crochet flowers), depending on the project you choose to create. You'll be asked throughout this course to find projects within your skill set that you want to pursue, learning from some online experts while receiving help from the teacher in the room. In the inbetween, we'll build a community, stitching while engaging in the oral tradition of storytelling. Participants will receive basic supplies that include: a few embroidery essentials, crochet hooks, and some inexpensive yarn. No experience necessary, but patience and a tolerance for imperfection are required, as it takes time to learn these lifelong skills. NOTE: Extra purchase of materials will be required for those who want special supplies (thicker yarn for blanket making, perhaps, or a set of crochet hooks to have at home). Luckily, the fiber arts can be an inexpensive hobby. A few supplies go a long way.

Craft and Draft

Grab your glue, scissors, and creativity and get ready to craft and write. In this course, students will learn a variety of collaging techniques, from remove and replace to jumbles to surrealism. With a heavy emphasis on collage, we'll dig through old magazines and books creating a glue book showcasing various skills that show intentional composition. Side projects will include artist trading cards and tear collage. While there will be guided instruction, students will have time to experiment and explore, working independently to create collages that are meaningful and keepsake-worthy. There will be ample time for sharing, experimentation, collaging, and creative exploration.

Art & Creative Writing: Exploring Identity Through Art and Writing

This is an art and writing class. It offers a unique and immersive learning experience that delves into the multifaceted realm of identity. This interactive course encourages participants to blend the expressive mediums of art and writing so as to investigate and express various dimensions of self-identity. Throughout the course students will engage in creative activities including collage-making, drawing, poetry composition, and creative writing exercises. These artistic practices will serve as a means of introspection and self-expression, allowing students to explore and convey their identity in diverse and imaginative ways.

Speech and Debate

This introductory speech and debate course exposes students to various types of speeches and argumentation styles in an engaging yet clear and concise manner. Students will craft and present prepared, as well as impromptu, speeches. They will learn and utilize specific debate techniques to create effective and persuasive class presentations, demonstrations, and group discussions. Working together, students will develop the skills to succinctly and effectively speak to their audience, ensuring that their thoughts are eloquently presented in a style that grabs the attention of their audience.

Current Events

This course will expose students to local, national and global issues. Various media outlets will be used to cull events including internet, television news and the newspaper. Classroom discussion will be the cornerstone of how we internalize and make sense of current events. The goal is for students to have a heightened awareness of the issues that drive the news and the issues that are most relevant to their lives.

Film Studies

On average, the typical American spends more than two hours a day watching television. So what, we might ask, makes movies and television programs so engaging and addicting? Since humanity's earliest beginnings, the art of storytelling has captivated imaginations with literary devices still used in film and television programs today. In this class, we will explore the fundamentals of filmmaking such as (but not limited to) theme, tone, conflict, symbol, and foreshadowing to unlock the success and meaning behind cinema's most famous films. On a deeper level, we will use the analytical skills we learn about filmmaking to explore cinema's broader questions about society, life, and culture. At the close of this class, students will be able to confidently apply their skills to recognize, analyze, describe and enjoy film as an art and entertainment form. They will also be able to critically examine different types of cinematic media so that they are better informed about the information they consume on a daily basis.

Yearbook

This year-long course is open to 8th grade students only and provides a workshop setting in which students' skills are developed in selected aspects of yearbook production. Students learn basic principles of yearbook production and develop skills that include the interview process, writing captions and digital photography. Students will be working with the HS Yearbook staff. Work will be included in The Roar 2024-2025 yearbook. The Yearbook elective course will meet during the middle school elective period. This is a year long course and is the foundational course for further participation in Yearbook in high school.

JEWISH STUDIES

Jewish Studies Department Philosophy: To make Torah accessible for all learners. To inspire connections to Jewish values, history, and beliefs. To promote lifelong learning.

Pluralism is one of the core values of San Diego Jewish Academy, and this value is reflected in the upper school Jewish Studies curriculum in a number of ways. First, the instruction in our classes is descriptive rather than prescriptive; we teach a wide range of rituals and beliefs, giving students a sense of the rich and varied choices that modern Judaism offers. Second, all upper school Judaic Studies texts are studied in English translation; although we lament the loss of the authenticity of the original languages, we prioritize the text's accessibility to all our students regardless of their comfort levels in Hebrew and Aramaic. Third, our course offerings in 10th and 11th grade provides students with the opportunity to personalize their Judaic Studies coursework in a way that maximizes relevance and connection to their beliefs, practices, and interests. Finally, we employ the broadest possible applications of traditional terms such as spirituality, God, and text, with the understanding that 21st century Jewish teenagers relate to these concepts in a myriad of ways.

The SDJA Jewish Studies classroom is rarely quiet. We engage in thoughtful discussions and close textual analysis. We frequently utilize a havruta model, in which the text serves as the third partner in the learning triangle. We believe deeply that the question is more important than the answer, and that making modern meaning out of age-old ideas is a cherished opportunity rather than an arduous task.

Our students come from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds, and we take pride in fostering each student's intellectual and emotional Jewish development. Judaic Studies students engage in learning through a variety of methods, including journaling, discussion, debates, and projects that bring traditional ideas into modern-day relevance. We actively encourage critical thinking, reflection, close textual reading, and other skills that serve them well in all disciplines.

Middle School

The middle school Judaic Studies curriculum is based on the power of story. Students study the Torah in 6th grade, the Prophets and Writings in 7th grade, and Jewish History in 8th grade. Thus, they enter high school with a broad understanding of the narrative history of the Jewish people. This narrative consists of far more than dates, names, and places: it traces the development of our people, our values, and our traditions from the creation of the world through the modern era. By the end of 8th grade, our students have the ability to reflect on five thousand years of Jewish tradition, to see themselves as a continuation of that tradition, and to appreciate the timelessness of this narrative and its relevance to the learners' own lives.

Jewish Studies: Required Middle School Courses

6th Grade: Study of Torah

The Torah, comprised of the Five Books of Moses, represents the core of Jewish values, ethics, narratives, and beliefs. It tells the story of our beginnings as a family and how we evolved into a nation with a 'constitution' and a connection to G-d and the Land of Israel. Our 6th graders will review the Weekly Torah Portions, with which they are already familiar, but now they will examine the text with traditional commentaries. They will hone their critical thinking skills as they examine the narratives of biblical events as well as the messages behind them. We will examine the text of the Torah through three different, overlapping lenses: P'shat (literal or simple meaning), D'rash (commentaries and rabbinic interpretations), and personal Midrash (giving the students a vehicle to apply their own understandings and world views to the text). We will focus on who we are as a people, what is our ancestral connection to the land of Israel, how we view the universe, how we relate and interact with others, and how events shaped us. As students of Torah, they will be asked to engage in the Jewish exhortation: *hafoch ba v'hafoch ba, kulei ba* - turn the Torah over and over for everything is in it.

7th Grade: The Tanakh and its Teachings

This course continues the students' two-year study of the Tanakh, the Jewish Bible. As we focus on Nevi'im (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings), we will explore what Tanakh can teach us about how the Israelites came to be the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, which values and beliefs are core to this part of the Jewish story, and how these texts influence our understanding of what it means to be Jewish today. Students will explore key Biblical events, themes, and characters; analyze and interpret Biblical text (using an English translation); and connect these texts and topics to their own lives and the modern Jewish world.

8th Grade: Survey of Jewish History

In eighth grade Jewish history, our study of the Jewish story picks up where the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) ends and continues through the 21st century. This class is designed to increase students' historical literacy and their ability to make meaning from historical events and the telling of those events. In the Passover Haggadah we read, "In every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally came out of Egypt." Although this directive is typically applied to the Mosaic period alone, we will also apply this idea to the entirety of Jewish history. Just as we were slaves in Egypt, we were also prophets in exile, rabbis in Yavneh, ge'onim in Babylonia, philosophers in Sepharad, interpreters in Ashkenaz, maskilim in Europe, chalutzim in Israel, etc. In order to make this claim, the claim that the Jewish story is not just the Jews' story but our story or even my story, we will study, analyze, and interpret its components, their importance, and their relevance. We will explore primary and secondary source texts, compare and contrast different historical eras with each other and with the modern Jewish world, including the creation of the state Israel and modern Israel, and make connections between our own lives and the lives of Jews throughout the ages.

Jewish Studies: Elective Courses

Moot Beit Din

What does Judaism say about today's big issues? In the Moot Beit Din Elective we will debate, discuss, and delve into a legal case about a hot topic. Each year, we explore something different, as determined by the national Moot Beit Din case. In this elective you will explore Jewish texts, work with a team to prepare an argument/presentation, debate other teams, and then participate in an out-of-town competition against other schools. If you like to debate and argue, come check out Moot Beit Din!

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics Department Philosophy: Our math department strives to create a positive and nurturing environment where students are comfortable with the learning process where making mistakes, taking risks, communicating ideas and working collaboratively are encouraged. A strong emphasis is placed on the conceptual understanding of mathematics so students can explain why the math makes sense. Meaningful real-world applications are consistently incorporated to develop creative problem solving skills as well as an appreciation of math and its relationship to other disciplines.

Middle School Math Course Pathways

Pathway 1: Fundamentals of Pre-Algebra → Pre-Algebra → Fundamentals of Algebra

Pathway 2: Fundamentals of Pre-Algebra → Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I* or I H*

Pathway 3: Pre-Algebra → Fundamentals of Algebra → Algebra I*

Pathway 4: Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I* → Geometry* or Geometry H*

Pathway 5: Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I H* → Geometry* or Geometry H*

** Indicates a high school level course.*

Fundamentals of Pre-Algebra

This math course is a continuation of the Singapore based math program used in the SDJA Lower School. The Singapore approach focuses on problem solving while offering a balanced emphasis on conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Students use concrete and pictorial representations to solve multistep and nonroutine problems. Topics in this course include the number line and positive and negative numbers; fractions; ratios; rates; percent; introduction to algebra: expressions, equations and inequalities; the coordinate plane; area and surface area; circumference; volume; and statistics.

Pre-Algebra

Prerequisite: Fundamentals of Pre-Algebra with passing grades both semesters.

This course utilizes a hard copy text and computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Unit topics include the number system; ratios and proportional relationship; expressions, equations, and inequalities; modeling geometric figures; circumference; area; volume; statistics; and probability.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current math teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Fundamentals of Algebra

Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra with passing grades both semesters

This course utilizes a hard copy text and computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Unit topics include real numbers, exponents, and scientific notation; proportional and nonproportional relationships and functions; solving equations and systems of equations; transformational geometry; measurement geometry; volume; and statistics. Students are introduced to the basic functions of the graphing calculator, which is required for this course.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current math teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Algebra 1*

Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra Honors with passing grades both semesters.

This course provides the basic building blocks necessary for all higher level mathematics courses. It utilizes a hard copy text and a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Algebra 1 is the first course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. The course starts with algebraic expressions and introduces function notation and linear functions. It continues with absolute value functions, systems of equations, systems of inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, operations with radicals and radical functions, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, and an introduction to operations with rational functions. Students will be held responsible for understanding how every topic in the course can be organized into six fundamental elements of mathematical development: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, equations, and graphing. Students will be

introduced to the numerical, algebraic, and graphical approach of analyzing equations and problem solving. Students will be instructed on how to use the TI-83/84 platform to further solidify key concepts. Students will be shown efficient approaches to problems and student collaboration will be emphasized. Students are expected to consider multiple approaches to each problem.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current math teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Geometry*

Prerequisites: Algebra I with a minimum grade of a C- both semesters

This course utilizes a hard copy text and a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Geometry is the second course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. Students will be shown how geometry is a language illustrated through algebra. Therefore, Algebra 1 concepts are reviewed throughout the entire course. Geometry develops logical reasoning and spatial intelligence. In the regular geometry course, linear algebra is primarily used and geometric proofs are usually tested by filling in the blanks of a logical argument. The course will cover the language of geometry, logical arguments, transformations, triangle relationships and congruence, quadrilaterals, proportions and similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, area, geometric probability and volume. The course focuses on applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of conceptual understanding with procedural fluency. Students use the graphing calculator as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving. Students learn and apply properties of geometrical objects and develop their ability to construct formal, logical arguments and proofs in geometric settings.

Note: Please reference the email you received from your current teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Mathematics: Honors Courses

Pre-Algebra Honors

Prerequisite: Fundamentals of Pre-Algebra with a minimum grade of a 95% both semesters and departmental approval.

This preparatory algebra course utilizes a hard copy text and a computer based program that includes an online textbook and additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. This course moves at a more advanced pace compared to Pre-Algebra as topics from both Pre-Algebra and Fundamentals of Algebra are studied. Unit topics

include the number system; ratios and proportional relationships; expressions, equations and inequalities; geometry; statistics; probability; real numbers, exponents, and scientific notation; linear relationships and equations; transformational geometry; measurement geometry; the Pythagorean Theorem and the distance formula.

Note: When both a middle school preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current math teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Algebra I Honors*

Prerequisites: Pre-Algebra Honors with a minimum grade of a B both semesters and departmental approval.

This course provides the basic building blocks necessary for all higher level mathematics courses, particularly Geometry Honors and Algebra II Honors. It utilizes a hard copy text and a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Honors Algebra 1 is the first course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. The course starts with algebraic expressions and introduces function notation and linear functions. It continues with absolute value functions, systems of equations, systems of inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, operations with radicals and radical functions, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, and an introduction to operations with rational functions. Students will be held responsible for understanding how every topic in the course can be organized into six fundamental elements of mathematical development: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, equations, and graphing. Students will be introduced to the numerical, algebraic, and graphical approach of analyzing equations and problem solving. The honors course covers topics in greater depth and moves at a faster pace. The course moves deeper into the understanding domain and range of all functions covered and requires in depth application and problem-solving skills. Students will be instructed on how to use the TI-83/84 platform as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving.

Note: When both a middle school preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current math teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Geometry Honors*

Prerequisites: Algebra I with a grade of 95% or higher both semesters and departmental approval or Algebra I Honors with a grade of a B or higher both semesters with departmental approval.

This course utilizes a hard copy text and a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Geometry Honors is the second course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. Students will be shown how geometry is a language illustrated through algebra. Geometry honors develops high level logical reasoning and spatial intelligence. In Geometry Honors, linear, quadratic, and rational equations are used to illustrate geometric language, and geometric proofs are demanding and students are required to prove logical arguments from start to finish. The course covers the language of geometry, logical arguments, transformations, triangle relationships and congruence, quadrilaterals, proportions and similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, area, geometric probability and volume. The honors course is proof based and focuses on applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of conceptual understanding with procedural fluency. Students use the graphing calculator as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving. Students learn and apply properties of geometrical objects and develop their ability to construct formal, logical arguments and proofs in geometric settings. Second semester Algebra 1 is heavily reviewed and required for higher level problem solving in second semester Geometry.

Note: When both a college preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects. The knowledge and skills acquired in this course, including proficiency with the material as well as comfort with the fast pace, are critical building blocks for success in future advanced math courses.

Note: Please reference the email you will receive from your current teacher stating which math course you qualify for in the 2024-2025 school year. If you have any questions regarding the math course you qualify for, please contact your math teacher or the math department chair.

Department Note: San Diego Jewish Academy requires all middle school students entering Pre-Algebra, Pre-Algebra Honors, Fundamentals of Algebra, Algebra 1, Algebra 1 Honors, Geometry, and Geometry Honors to complete a summer math assignment that is due on the first day of class.

In conjunction with the summer math assignment, SDJA offers a Summer Enrichment Program for students entering these courses that serves as a teacher-led review of the concepts covered in the summer math assignment. This program (including both the summer assignment and the Summer Enrichment) is designed to help students maintain their math skills throughout the summer, and start the school year with confidence. All students are encouraged to participate.

Any student who is entering San Diego Jewish Academy from another institution and who is requesting to be part of an honors course must earn an 85% on the qualifying/diagnostic exam i.e. an honors final exam from SDJA's previous year's math course (ex: if a student is entering Algebra 1 Honors, the student must earn an 85% on the Pre-Algebra Honors Final exam). The student is also required to participate in SDJA's Summer Enrichment Program for the honors course that they will be taking along with their completion of the corresponding summer assignment.

If a student completed a regular math course at SDJA, and has been recommended for an honors course by meeting the stated requirements, the student is required to participate in SDJA's Summer Enrichment Program for the honors course that they will be taking along with their completion of the corresponding summer assignment. Additionally, the student may be required to take a diagnostic/qualifying exam before the start of the honors course.

SCIENCE

Science Department Philosophy: The mission of the science department at SDJA is to promote scientific literacy. We want our students to be curious about both the physical and living world. Classes are designed so that students focus on big ideas in science, and develop critical thinking skills, the ability to design an experiment, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and support a conclusion with scientific evidence. Through lab inquiry, scientific observation, reading scientific material, writing about science, and scientific problem solving, students come to understand science as a process for investigation and discovery.

Science: Required Courses

Earth Science (Science 6)

Science 6 is an opportunity for students to experience Earth Science. The students will begin the school year growing plants in the local soil and by the end they will be exploring outer space. In between, we will be engaging with our planet in space, its weather and atmosphere, plate tectonics, erosion, and rocks and minerals. Students will experience Earth Science through investigations, field trips, labs, and role-playing activities that will teach them to think like scientists. In their first middle school science class, students will expand their skills in the lab and develop their problem solving, critical thinking, and data analysis skills. Students will work both individually and in collaboration with their classmates and will develop written and oral communication skills.

Life Science (Science 7)

What happens to our food after we swallow it? Why do we have the same eye color as our parents? How do scientists find cures for disease? These are just some of the questions students will explore in Life Science. This course is an inquiry based, hands on introduction to the life sciences. Students will experience life science through labs, investigations and role-playing activities that will expand their skills in the lab and develop their problem solving, critical thinking and data analysis skills. Students will work both individually and in collaboration with their classmates and will continue to improve their written and oral communication skills. Topics include how to study people, the human body, cell biology and disease, genetics, ecology, evolution and bioengineering.

Physical Science (Science 8)

In this Physical science course, students will explore concepts in physics and chemistry through hands-on, inquiry-based activities. Vehicle collisions and energy conservation will launch us into the exploration of physics concepts including forces, Newton's Laws of Motion and energy. Later in the year, students will be introduced to the elements on the periodic table and how they interact with one another to create the world around us, even the air we breathe! Discovery is encouraged in this experiential laboratory environment. This class allows students to examine scientific issues in a societal context and gives students an understanding of science and technology in order to make informed personal and community decisions. Through projects integrated into these units of study, students learn to design experiments and gather data to support or refute a scientific claim. In addition, students have the option to participate in the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair.

Science: Elective Courses

Programming Robotics

Fascinated by robots? Curious about how they think? This class will help you understand how to program robots to do what we want them to do! We will start with exploring foundational programming ideas, learning how to draw and make 'turtles' move on our computers. Then we will explore the basics of what makes a robot, how they work and the different kinds of roles they play in our lives. Finally, we will put the pieces together to program robots to do what we want them to do. Let's face it, robots are cool, come learn the basic process of building a simple autonomous mobile robot

Forensics

Step under the yellow tape and join the fascinating world of forensics, the application of science to solve crimes! In this hands-on, investigative course, students will learn about the many types of evidence, how it is gathered, how it is examined, and how to analyze what actually happened at the scene of a crime. Using skills drawn from scientific topics like biology, anatomy, chemistry and physics, students will study and analyze fingerprints, handwriting, hair and fibers, photographs, ballistics, DNA fingerprints and toxicology. All of the techniques and skills learned are drawn directly from actual crime scene investigators working in the field and in the laboratory. The final project will be the

complete analysis of a crime scene using all of the skills you learned during the semester!

Make It

Themes for this class include junkyard wars, boat building and using electronics to create interactive objects that can work in the real world. Make It is a class to explore your own ideas with physical materials. Designed to introduce students who love to tinker, design, build, and create, the class will explore hands-on uses of different mechanical, electrical, and digital technologies. Throughout the course, students will work alone and in teams to create objects with a variety of components. Let's get our hands on some stuff, come up with an idea, and figure out how to make it happen!

Circuitry

Through hands-on projects, students will explore the science of electricity and circuits. Students will acquire knowledge and skills in basic circuitry design and examine the impact of electricity on our lives. We will build an electromagnetic DC motor, magnetic levitation vehicles, and design, create and race dragster cars. In addition, we will work with low-power circuits to learn about how capacitors, diodes, resistors, sensors, and many other devices work and what they are used for. Finally, we will explore ways to generate electricity using DC motors and wind or water and how solar panels generate energy.

Google CS First and Python

This middle school introductory computer science course is for students who have little to no background in computer science. This course introduces students to real-world uses of computer science and its impacts in the community, and is intended to spark a student's interest in pursuing future computer science course offerings. Students start-out participating in theme-based activities to learn core computer science concepts through Scratch, a block-based coding tool. Themes for projects include: storytelling, fashion, social media, sports, music, art, animation, and game design. Students then move on to coding in Python, a popular object oriented, high-level programming language able to run on a wide variety of systems. The class culminates in a final project intended to showcase progress students have made. This course is recommended for students who enjoy learning by doing and work well in a self-paced learning environment that emphasizes collaboration and creativity.

Drawing with Code

In this course, students will extend the skills and concepts learned in Google CS First & Python to explore the programming language called Processing. Built on Java, but simpler, Processing is a flexible software language for learning how to code within the context of the visual arts. The first programs all start with drawing; students new to programming find it incredibly satisfying to make something appear on their screen within moments of using the software. This motivating curriculum teaches students the basics of object-oriented programming and skills that can be built upon in the high school engineering and computer science classes.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Hebrew

Ulpan Or's iHebrew interactive curriculum has been designed for students to gain significant conversational skills in the Hebrew language. Utilizing a web based platform, coupled with teacher guided classroom experiences, the program supports beginners up to very advanced Hebrew speakers. It is based on a unique second language acquisition approach. It is based on a unique second language acquisition approach – RLA (Rapid Language Acquisition) developed by Orly & Yoel Ganor, founders of Ulpan-Or. The iHebrew™ curriculum Hebrew levels coincide with those defined by ACTFL (American Council On the Teaching of Foreign Languages), which makes those very objective and creates a common denominator between various schools using it as well as creating a smooth transition between middle schools and high schools.

Hebrew 1

This course is the foundation of the Hebrew language. Students will be learning to recognize the letters in print (for reading), and will be learning cursive (for writing). In this Novice-Low level course, students will build a foundation by:

1. Acquiring an active vocabulary of 350 new words: pronouns, nouns, adjectives- all related to the core contents of the book.
2. Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogs: Acquaintance, family, shopping, directions, traveling and food.
3. Learning numbers between 1-20, and becoming familiar with Israeli money (coins and bills).
4. Introducing a grammatical base for building simple sentences.

Hebrew 2

In this Novice-Low level course, students will master the foundation-level concepts taught in Hebrew 1, by:

1. Mastering an active vocabulary of 350 new words: pronouns, nouns, adjectives- all related to the core contents of the book.
2. Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogues: Acquaintance, family, shopping, directions, traveling and food.
3. Learning numbers between 21-99, and becoming familiar with Israeli money (coins and bills).
4. Building a grammatical base: 4 helping verbs (want, need, can, love) and mastering the use combined with Pa'al infinitives.

Then, students will acquire Novice-Mid level concepts by:

1. Acquiring an active vocabulary of 500 new words: pronouns, nouns and adjectives- all related to core contents.

2. Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogs related to: Acquaintance, family, figures and characters, adjectives and history.
3. Mastering Binyan Pa'al- infinitives and present tense.

Hebrew 3

In this Novice-Mid level course, students will master concepts by:

1. Acquiring an active vocabulary of 500 new words: pronouns, nouns and adjectives- all related to core content.
2. Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogs related to: Acquaintance, family, figures and characters, adjectives and history.
3. Mastering Binyan Pa'al- infinitives and present tense

Hebrew 4

In this Novice-High level course, students will acquire concepts by:

1. Learning infinitives and present tense conjugations of 4 different Binyanim and basic knowledge of time phrases.
2. Speaking freely in Hebrew while using everyday phrases.
3. Experiencing Israeli culture via people, landscape and songs- all contribute to a rich learning experience.

Hebrew 5 Honors

In this Novice-High level course, students will master concepts by:

1. Learn infinitives and present tense conjugations of 4 different Binyanim and basic knowledge of time phrases.
2. Speak freely in Hebrew while using everyday phrases.
3. Experience Israeli culture via people, landscape and songs- all contribute to a rich learning experience.

Then, students will acquire Intermediate-Low concepts by:

1. Learning past tense in all 5 Binyanim, while acquiring a deeper understanding of prepositions and their conjugations.
2. Acquiring the ability to converse freely and accurately in Hebrew about various everyday topics in everyday life in Israel.
3. Experiencing Authentic Israeli culture through spoken Hebrew and encountering different people and situations in Israel.

Spanish

At the San Diego Jewish Academy, the Maimonides Middle School Spanish program is focused on creating and sustaining an intellectually challenging, academically rigorous and diverse learning environment where students can thrive. Through language skills

acquisition, students further their growth and cultivate a life-long appreciation and enthusiasm for the Spanish language and the cultures it reflects.

The Spanish program is guided by ACTFL standards five C's of foreign language education --Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities - to maintain excellence in teaching and to help students become a globally cultured, diversity-sensitive individuals ready to thrive in a new era of globalization in today's increasingly interdependent world community.

Spanish 1

Spanish 1 is a beginning Spanish course. In this course, students will begin to master the skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students will develop an understanding and knowledge of grammatical structures, build vocabulary, and begin writing as well as developing oral and auditory proficiency through the use of storytelling. The course work incorporates cultural literacy and appreciation of Spanish and Spanish-speaking cultures. The Spanish 1 course for middle school students will meet during the middle school elective period. This is a year-long course, offered to 8th grade only, and is the foundational course for further study of Spanish in high school.