

The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies Curriculum: A Foundation for Jewish Leadership

The core of a rabbi's role lies in their ability to communicate Jewish wisdom in a way that is relevant, meaningful, and inspiring to people's lives. Whether providing consolation, offering perspective, or infusing life's joys with greater depth and balance, a rabbi's charge is to guide and support their community.

At Ziegler, we believe that a strong foundation in Jewish thought is essential for fulfilling this role. Our curriculum is designed to equip students with the tools they need to master text, study, and apply their insights to contemporary challenges.

The First Three Years: Building a Strong Foundation

The program's first three years focus on building a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and understanding. By immersing themselves in the rich tapestry of Jewish thought, students gain a deep appreciation for the textual traditions that shape Jewish identity.

- **Mastering the Masorah:** We emphasize the importance of mastering the Masorah, the vast corpus of Jewish texts that includes the Tanakh, Rabbinics, Parshanut, Philosophy, Kabbalah, and Hassidut. Through intensive language study and textual analysis, students develop the ability to access and understand these foundational texts.
- **Broadening Horizons:** The curriculum offers a broad exposure to the various fields of Jewish study, including Hebrew language, rabbinics, Jewish philosophy, and history. This provides students with a solid understanding of the diverse perspectives and approaches within Jewish thought.
- **Professional Development:** While the initial focus is on academic mastery, we also incorporate opportunities for professional development. Students participate in field placements, learn basic Halakhah, and develop skills in leading prayer services. This helps them begin to apply their knowledge in practical settings.

The Israel Intensive: A Deepening Connection

In the third summer, all Ziegler students participate in an intensive program in Israel. This experience is designed to deepen their connection to the Land of Israel, the Hebrew language, and the people of Israel. By immersing themselves in the Jewish homeland,

students gain a firsthand understanding of the historical, cultural, and religious significance of Israel.

The Final Year: Residency

The final year of the program culminates in a residency, where students gain practical experience in a rabbinic role. This hands-on experience allows them to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world setting.

A Holistic Approach

Throughout the curriculum, we strive to provide a holistic education that integrates academic study with practical experience and personal growth. By combining rigorous coursework with opportunities for community engagement, leadership development, and spiritual reflection, we prepare our students to become dynamic and compassionate rabbis who can make a positive impact on their communities.

Sample Curriculum

Year One

Fall Semester

- **BIB 509: Overview of Torah** (3 credits): A foundational course exploring the Torah's literary, historical, and theological dimensions.
- **HEB 511: Hebrew for Reading Comprehension I** (4 credits): Develops essential Hebrew reading skills, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and textual analysis.
- **PHL 512: Introduction to Jewish Philosophy** (3 credits): Introduces major Jewish philosophical thinkers and their contributions to Jewish thought.
- **RAB 501: Readings in Rabbinics** (6 credits): Explores a wide range of rabbinic texts, focusing on their literary, historical, and theological significance.
- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.
- **RAB 507: Introduction to Halakhah** (3 credits): Explores the fundamental principles and practices of Jewish law.

Mid-Semester Intensive

- **PRS: The Jewish Lifecycle** (2 credits): Examines the rituals and customs surrounding major life events in Judaism.

Spring Semester

- **HIS 520: Survey of Jewish History** (3 credits): Provides a comprehensive overview of Jewish history from ancient times to the present.
- **HEB 512: Hebrew for Reading Comprehension II** (4 credits): Continues to develop Hebrew reading skills, focusing on more advanced texts.
- **PHL 551: Liturgy: Development and Theology** (3 credits): Explores the history, theology, and practice of Jewish liturgy.
- **RAB 510: Mishnah and Tosefta** (6 credits): Studies the Mishnah and Tosefta, two foundational texts of rabbinic Judaism.
- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.
- **PHL 563: Halakhah of Liturgy** (3 credits): Examines the halakhic aspects of Jewish liturgy.

Year Two

Fall Semester

- **HEB 513: Hebrew for Reading Comprehension III** (4 credits): Further develops Hebrew reading skills, focusing on complex texts.
- **BIB 525: Parshanut** (3 credits): Explores the methods and techniques of biblical exegesis.
- **BIB: Nevi'im (Prophets)** (3 credits): Studies the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible.
- **RAB: Aggadah** (6 credits): Examines the non-legal portions of rabbinic literature.
- **HIS 521: Issues of Modernity** (3 credits): Explores contemporary Jewish issues and their theological and ethical implications.
- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.

Mid-Semester Intensive

- **Aramaic Intensive:** (2 credits): Studies the Aramaic language, which is essential for understanding many rabbinic texts.

Spring Semester



- **RAB: Legal Concepts and Methods of Argumentation/Interpretation in Rabbinic Literature – Intro to Talmud** (6 credits): Introduces the Talmud and its methods of legal reasoning.
- **HEB 514: Hebrew for Reading Comprehension III** (4 credits): Further develops Hebrew reading skills, focusing on complex texts.
- **PHL 511: Kabbalah, Hasidut, Musar: Literature & Philosophy** (3 credits): Explores the mystical, devotional, and ethical traditions of Judaism.
- **PRS 530: Homiletics** (3 credits): Develops skills in sermon preparation and delivery.
- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.
- **RAB 524: Midrash** (3 credits): Studies the methods and techniques of midrashic interpretation.

Israel Summer

- **PHL: Israel Seminar - The Modern State of Israel** (3 credits): Explores the history, politics, and culture of modern Israel.
- **RAB: Biblical and Rabbinic Texts of the Land** (3 credits): Studies texts related to the land of Israel.
- **HEB: Conversational Hebrew** (4 credits): Develops conversational Hebrew skills.

Year Three

Fall Semester

- **PHL 553: Conservative Judaism: Theology, Law, and Ethics I** (4 credits): Explores the theological, legal, and ethical principles of Conservative Judaism.
- **RAB: Talmud: Sugyot** (6 credits): Studies specific tractates of the Talmud in depth.
- **BIB: Megillot and Jonah** (3 credits): Studies the Megillot (scrolls) and the book of Jonah.
- **RAB: Jewish Law I: A Survey of Contemporary Issues** (3 credits): Examines contemporary issues in Jewish law.
- **PRS: Professional Development/Identity** (2 credits): Explores personal and professional identity development.
- **PRS: Rabbi as Manager** (2 credits): Develops leadership and management skills for rabbis.

- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.

Spring Semester

- **PHL 553: Conservative Judaism: Theology, Law, and Ethics II** (4 credits): Continues to explore the theological, legal, and ethical principles of Conservative Judaism.
- **PRS 531: Advanced Homiletics: Rabbinic Communication** (3 credits): Develops advanced skills in sermon preparation and delivery.
- **RAB: Advanced Midrash** (3 credits): Explores advanced techniques of midrashic interpretation.
- **PRS 507: Tefillah Skills** (1 credit): Develops skills in leading prayer services.
- **RAB: Jewish Law II: In Depth Exploration of a Particular Issue** (3 credits): Examines a specific issue in Jewish law in depth.
- **PRS 520: Pastoral Counseling I** (3 credits): Introduces basic pastoral counseling skills.
- **RAB 589: Beit Midrash** (1 credit): Provides a space for intensive textual study and discussion.

Year Four (Residency Year)

Fall Semester

- **PRS: Residency** (6 credits): Provides practical experience in a rabbinic role.
- **RAB: Today's Torah** (3 credits): Explores contemporary approaches to understanding and applying the Torah.
- **PRS: Practical Rabbinics** (3 credits): Develops practical skills for rabbinic work.

Mid-Semester Intensive

- **PHL 562: Issues of Justice** (2 credits): Examines contemporary issues of justice and their implications for Jewish thought and practice.

Spring Semester

- **PRS: Residency** (6 credits): Provides practical experience in a rabbinic role.
- **RAB 536: Torah of the Heart** (3 credits): Explores the spiritual and emotional dimensions of Jewish life.
- **PRS: Practical Rabbinics** (3 credits): Develops practical skills for rabbinic work.

Practical Rabbinics Courses (2 per semester to be offered in rotation)

- **PRS 521: Pastoral Counseling II** (3 credits): Develops advanced pastoral counseling skills.
- **PRS: Community Organizing** (3 credits): Explores strategies for community organizing and social change.
- **PRS: Advanced Lifecycles** (3 credits): Examines the rituals and customs surrounding major life events in Judaism in depth.
- **PRS: Entrepreneurialism** (3 credits): Introduces entrepreneurial skills for rabbis.
- **PRS 567: Creating Sacred Community** (3 credits): Explores strategies for building and nurturing vibrant Jewish communities.
- **RAB 537: Torah of the Heart II** (3 credits): Continues to explore the spiritual and emotional dimensions of Jewish life.
- **Education Classes** (3 credits): Focuses on pedagogical skills and techniques for teaching Jewish texts.
- **Teaching Rabbinic Texts** (3 credits): Provides practical experience in teaching rabbinic texts.

Note: This is a suggested curriculum and may be subject to change. Please consult the official [Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies catalog](#) (beginning at page 79) for the most up-to-date information.