

Course Description

The Five Megillot explore some of the most timeless and fascinating questions in Tanach: What is the meaning of life? What does it mean to love? How do we respond to tragedy and suffering? Where is G-d when He seems hidden? What does it mean to make a difference in the lives of others?

In this class, we will study the Five Megillot—Kohelet, Shir HaShirim, Eicha, Esther, and Rut—exploring the unique themes and messages of each book. Through close reading of selected pesukim, discussion, and the study of classical and modern commentaries, students will consider both the historical context and the enduring relevance of these texts. For Esther and Rut, we will have the opportunity to study each book in its entirety.

Course Goals

Students will:

- Become familiar with the major themes and messages of each of the Five Megillot.
- Develop skills in reading, translating, and analyzing pesukim.
- Study a sampling of pesukim from Kohelet, Shir HaShirim, and Eicha, focusing on the central ideas and themes of each book.
- Study the books of Esther and Rut in their entirety.
- Learn to identify textual questions and use commentaries to deepen their understanding of the text.
- Develop the habit of looking beyond the surface of the text to discover deeper meaning, personal relevance, and contemporary applications.

Texts & Materials

- Tanach / Five Megillot
- Teacher-provided source sheets, handouts, and worksheets
- Students are strongly encouraged to use a **three-ring binder** to keep Tanach materials organized and accessible throughout the year.

Major Units

1. **Kohelet:** What gives life meaning? How should we think about happiness, success, and the passage of time?
2. **Shir HaShirim:** What does it mean to love? How can human love serve as a metaphor for the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people?
3. **Eicha:** How do we respond to tragedy, loss, and suffering? Where is G-d during times of destruction?
4. **Esther:** What does it mean when G-d seems hidden? How do individuals and communities respond to crises and take responsibility for their future?
5. **Rut:** What does it mean to be a person of kindness and loyalty? How can seemingly ordinary choices shape Jewish history?

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every day of class so that they can gain maximum benefit from the material and from the learning environment. As you will see below, my grading rubric reflects the great value I place on consistent attendance. Each student will be allowed two absences each quarter. Additional absences will impact the class participation component of the grade. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Grading & Assessment

Your grade will be determined by the following components:

- **40%** Academic assessments (ie. quizzes, tests, midterm, final, homework, projects)
- **60%** Class Engagement (ie. attendance, attention, participation and behavior)

Class Expectations

1. **Be prepared.** Arrive on time with your Tanach and a notebook. Class will begin and end on time.
2. **Take notes.** Note-taking reinforces learning and helps you prepare for assessments and assignments.
3. **Be attentive.** Keep your head up, avoid side conversations, and give your attention to the speaker or task at hand.
4. **Participate.** Read aloud when called upon, answer questions, contribute to discussions, and work productively during chavruta and classwork.
5. **Be respectful.** Speak and act respectfully toward classmates and the teacher at all times.
6. **Take responsibility for your learning.** Ask questions, seek clarification, and make productive use of class time.

Academic Integrity & AI

Honesty and integrity are core values. PLEASE ask questions when you need help rather than compromise your integrity. Students are expected to complete their work honestly and independently. Cheating, copying another student's work, submitting someone else's work as your own, or using unauthorized resources during an assessment are not permitted. Any assignment or assessment affected by academic dishonesty will receive zero credit.

AI may be used only when specifically permitted by the teacher and may not replace a student's own thinking, analysis, or writing. When AI use is permitted, students may be required to disclose and explain how it was used.

Contact Information

You can reach me by Whatsapp or text on my cell phone, (619) 846-0343 or by email at ariellaadatto@gmail.com. I turn my phone on Do Not Disturb when I go to bed, so you can text or whatsapp at any time. Call twice to get through if it's urgent.

I look forward to a wonderful year learning with you!