

About the Program

The Tikvah Scholars Program aims to educate the future intellectual, moral, civic, and religious leaders of the Jewish people by giving the most promising Jewish high school students a chance to study great texts and explore big questions with excellent scholars, teachers, and peers. The Tikvah program is about the spirited study of ideas—faith and reason, love and friendship, ethics and economics, freedom and virtue, human excellence and Jewish excellence—and the role they should play in constructing a deep and meaningful Jewish existence. It is rooted in the belief that the most intellectually ambitious high school students should consider the most serious Jewish and human questions, 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, literature, political thought, and theology in charting the Jewish future.

The students selected for the Tikvah Scholars Program will participate in an intensive academic course of study that will afford them the opportunity to study with excellent teachers and scholars in the Humanities, to develop relationships with students at other high schools who share similar interests, and to prepare an original essay using Jewish and Western sources to explore a perennial theme, the best of which will be awarded scholarships for future academic study.

Seminars

The centerpiece of the Tikvah Scholars Program will be a series of four intensive seminars led by superb teachers of the Jewish and Western philosophical, theological, political, and literary traditions. Each seminar will be dedicated to exploring a theme of enduring Jewish and human significance—including love and friendship, divine and human morality, chosenness and freedom—by examining classical and contemporary Jewish and Western texts. Tikvah Scholars will be required to carefully read a modest amount of preparatory material which will be distributed digitally in advance and to come prepared to contribute to the discussion.

The opening seminar will convene in the afternoon on Sunday, November 13th, and will continue through the following morning (Monday, November 14th). All Scholars will be expected to attend the opening seminar. Each of the three subsequent seminars will be held twice, with each Scholar



choosing to attend one of the two dates being offered. This structure is aimed at accommodating the conflicting schedules of the schools represented by participating Scholars and making more dates available for student participation. As opposed to the opening seminar which will span parts of two days, each of the final three seminars will take place over a single Sunday.

All events will be hosted in the metropolitan New York area, at venues to be determined. The Tikvah Fund will sponsor the costs of transportation, accommodations (when necessary), and food (dietary laws observed). The seminar dates (subject to change) are as follows:

Seminar 1: November 13-14, 2011

Seminar 2: December 11, 2011 or February 5, 2012

Seminar 3: March 4 or March 18, 2012

Seminar 4: April 22 or May 13, 2012

Web Community

Tikvah Scholars will supplement the intellectual work they undertake at the seminars by choosing one of two tracks, both of which will feature regular group discussion via an online forum. The first forum will consider brief essays on subjects of philosophical, literary, theological, historical, or communal significance, both related to the seminars and of general interest, which will be assigned twice per month and distributed digitally. Each student will be asked to post a 200-word critical response to the reading. The forum moderators will then choose the most useful of these responses to act as springboards for informal, shorter form exchange of ideas.

Scholars who choose the second track will, in collaboration with a mentor and a small group of peers, examine a single philosophical essay in depth over the course of the year. Each

Scholar will lead online discussion of a single component of the author's argument, and will ultimately prepare a written commentary on that component. The result of each group project will be a detailed analysis of the chosen essay which will serve as a useful resource for future readers.

Consistent contribution to one of these forums is a requirement for each Scholar's continued participation in the seminars, lunches, and essay competition.

Lunches

Several times over the course of the year, Tikvah Scholars will be invited to an exclusive lunch or dinner to be hosted by members of Tikvah's faculty and staff. Participation in each of these events will be limited to a small number of Scholars in order to facilitate an intimate environment in which each individual can contribute substantively and comfortably to the conversation. This will serve as an opportunity for continued discussion of the texts and ideas being explored at the seminars and via the web forum, to allow Scholars a chance to share feedback regarding other elements of the Program, and to enhance the feeling of community that we seek to cultivate among the Tikvah Scholars.

Essay Competition

Toward the end of the year, Tikvah Scholars will be invited to submit an essay which rigorously and imaginatively brings Jewish and Western sources to bear on a subject of their choosing. The Tikvah Fund will assemble an evaluation committee comprised of teachers, scholars, and Tikvah staff members who will choose a first place winner to receive \$3000 toward future academic study. Other cash prizes will be awarded for high-quality work.

How to Apply

Students will be selected from participating schools through a rigorous application process. Each school will coordinate the process, which may include interviews for finalists, along with Tikvah staff. Aside from a transcript, nominations from faculty, and a previous writing sample, the application will include a series of questions that applicants should respond to in approximately 400 words each. Answers to these questions will help the admissions committee understand how the applicants think and who they aspire to become.

Why the Tikvah Scholars Program?

- **Explore** the great contributions of Jewish thought to human self-understanding
- **Discover** how the great classics of philosophy, political thought, literature, and theology inform the Jewish future
- **Learn** with preeminent university professors, rabbis, and Jewish leaders
- **Prepare** a high-level intellectual project
- **Network** with serious students and scholars at other institutions
- **Travel** to encounter multi-faceted learning and leadership opportunities



Promoting Jewish thought on the enduring questions of human life

Esteemed faculty in 2010-11 included:

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, PhD Associate Rabbi at Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun and Director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University.

Erica Brown, PhD Scholar-in-residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and author most recently of *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood*.

Rabbi Shai Held, PhD Co-Founder, Rosh Yeshiva, and Chair in Jewish Thought at Mechon Hadar.

Jonathan Yonan, PhD Professor of History and Director of the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University.

Alan Mittleman, PhD Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Director of the Tikvah Institute for Jewish Thought at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Tikvah Fund is devoted to fostering Jewish intellectual life—a mission it pursues through seminars for post-high school students in Israel, summer institutes for university undergraduates, the year-long Post-BA Fellowship, university centers, publications, and more. Tikvah Scholars will join and participate in this intellectual community throughout the duration of the program.

THE TIKVAH HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Tikvah Program Staff

Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, *Dean of the Tikvah Scholars Program and Senior Director of the Tikvah Fund*

Mr. Joseph Siev, *Program Director*

The Tikvah Fund

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