Our purpose is simple: to inspire Jewish students through community building, collaborative ventures, leadership opportunities, and educational experiences. From enjoying a home-cooked Shabbat dinner at the Freeman Center to road tripping through the South, our students can explore Judaism and Jewish culture from countless vantage points and discover what excites them about leading a life inspired by Jewish values. There are so many entry points into Jewish life here at Duke - discover yours...
“I chose Duke knowing that I wanted a place that had a strong Jewish community where I could be as Jewish as I wanted to be. Still, I was a little nervous coming to campus for the first time as a freshman. The JFAM program really helped me settle in and prove that I had indeed picked the right place. I quickly found that Duke’s Jewish community was welcoming, communal, and really just a lot of fun. I’ve met so many great people through Jewish Life at Duke and made some of my best friends here.”

Kenny Green
Class of 2020
Hometown: Las Vegas, Nevada
Areas of Study: Economics & Computer Science
Between classes: Challah for Hunger, Duke Tour Guide, Jewish Student Union Membership Officer, Peer Tutoring, Project WILD
We understand that the first year of college can be intimidating; being out on your own, not knowing anyone, and having to adjust to college life is a lot to take on all at once. That’s why we make it a priority to welcome incoming students before they even set foot on campus. As part of the university orientation, our Jewish First Year Advisory Mentorship (JFAM) program provides you with a personal liaison to campus life who will reach out during the summer, so when you arrive on campus, you’ve got a friendly face eager to greet you. JFAM bridges the gap between first-year students and upper-class students, fostering relationships that make adjusting to both the Jewish and larger Duke communities much easier.

You’ll quickly learn that our community is a welcoming, close-knit, active group of students with diverse interests. We value that you will also bring your own ideas and passions to the mix. As a first-year student, you’ll have many opportunities to get involved and take on leadership roles. Whether you decide to join the Freshman Council, sit on the Jewish Student Union board, or bake with Challah for Hunger, you’ll find that your voice is always valued. From the get-go, you’ll have the ability to effect real change and help us nurture Jewish life on campus.
“My best friend returned to campus, two weeks after her mom passed away, determined to say Kaddish every day. She reached out to Jewish Life at Duke to help form a daily minyan, and they were instrumental in arranging everything in order for her to honor her mother’s memory. At least ten Jewish students and staff members from all across campus gathered each day to participate in the Mincha service. It’s things like this that remind me just how caring and dedicated Duke’s Jewish community is and how lucky I am to be a part of it.”

Daniella Nevid

Class of 2019

**Hometown:** New York, NY

**Areas of Study:** Asian and Middle Eastern Studies with a concentration in Hebrew; Chemistry minor; Pre-health track

**Between classes:** Illyria, Delta Gamma, Duke ICU, Duke Project Sunshine, Duke Thompson Writing Program
At Duke, you’ll have **countless opportunities** to engage with renowned Jewish academics and leaders from all facets of university life. Through the **Duke Center for Jewish Studies**, you can earn a certificate or design your own interdisciplinary major based on individual interests and professional goals. Enroll in Hebrew language courses and use those skills abroad on DukeEngage or for study in Israel. Take advantage of funded internships, supported honors research projects, and programs that have sent students all over the world.
“It was my first Passover away from home and I knew that I was going to miss my family’s Seder. Luckily, I also knew that I had friends on campus with whom I could celebrate the holiday. We had our own Seder, which was really meaningful to me. It was a powerful experience and made me feel like I was part of the community in a way that was really important and special.”

Molly Paley

Class of 2020
Hometown: Dallas, Texas
Areas of Study: Public Policy & Global Health
Between classes: Bass Connections Project Team, Challah for Hunger Executive Board, Duke Tour Guide, Kappa Alpha Theta
But learning isn’t just confined to the classroom walls. Our Jewish Agency Israel Fellow helps students discover Israel in all its complexity. And every year, the Israel Fellow leads a busload of Jewish students on Duke’s annual Birthright Israel trip. It’s an experience that goes far beyond the trip’s ten days: exploring sites of historic, cultural, and religious significance, students form deep bonds with the country, their fellow students, and the Jewish community.

Closer to home, our Roots to Rights trip brings Jewish and African-American students together on a six-day bus tour exploring the Civil Rights movement in the South. Offered in collaboration with the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture, the trip examines the shared beliefs that brought these seemingly disparate communities together during this pivotal period in American history.

There are scores of ways to explore your Jewish identity here, and no matter how you choose to engage, we’re confident that you’ll discover your own personal connection.
At Duke, I discovered not only could I retain my Jewish identity, but I could develop a far more meaningful connection to my own experience of the faith and the tradition. It’s so easy to get involved in Jewish Life at Duke in a way that is comfortable for you personally. I’ve been inspired to participate in Birthright and to become an official Bar Mitzvah. I’ve even been able to create my own student group, which is another benefit of Jewish Life at Duke—if for some reason they don’t offer something you want, you can easily create it yourself!

Jackson Prince
Class of 2019
Hometown: Beverly Hills, CA
Areas of Study: English Major; Documentary Studies certificate; Policy, Journalism, & Media Studies certificate
Between classes: Alpha Epsilon Pi, Editorial Page Editor of The Duke Chronicle, Founder of The Untitled Identity Project, Hoof ‘n’ Horn, Program Director of Project Arts, Vice President of Speak of the Devil
Duke students are driven, smart, and dedicated, so we rely on them to help move us forward. We know that **today’s Jewish students are tomorrow’s Jewish leaders.** That’s why, at Jewish Life at Duke, students are encouraged to flourish and develop their leadership talents. They help lead religious services, attend national conferences, and guide our Jewish student body. Students can seek out leadership roles with established Jewish student groups, or pioneer new programming and initiate student groups based on their own interests. Of course, Jewish students aren’t just leaders within the walls of the Freeman Center. Whether serving as President of the Inter-Fraternity Council or being recognized as one of Business Insider’s “incredibly impressive” Duke students, **Jewish students shine in every aspect of campus life.**
Located at the corner of Campus Drive and Swift Avenue on Duke’s Central Campus, the Freeman Center for Jewish Life is the hub of all things Jewish on campus and a home away from home for Jewish students. Since we’re right on the campus bus line, it’s easy to swing by. Grab dinner in our kosher dining hall, shoot some pool, catch the game on our big screen TV, or use our smart board technology to study with friends across campus. Come on by – our doors are always open to you.
Jewish Life at Duke is proud to be an accredited Hillel, fostering an enduring commitment to Jewish life. From Shabbat to Sukkot, from Hanukkah to Passover, the Rubenstein-Silvers Hillel offers our students a place to explore their unique cultural and religious identities. Our full-time campus rabbi facilitates Shabbat and holiday celebrations and services, and is always available for spiritual guidance and support. In true Duke form, our students are not afraid to dive in, taking on everything from shofar blowing to hosting their own Passover seders.

But we’re not only a Hillel – we’re also an official department of Duke University, fully integrated into the fabric of university life. It’s the best of both worlds, really – terrific Jewish programming, of course, but with the added benefit of Duke University’s full support. Kosher dining is offered through the Duke meal plan and available to all students. Duke also maintains a Religious Observance Policy, which recognizes all Jewish holidays and provides the opportunity to be excused from class on those days. This policy reflects the University’s commitment to honoring Duke’s increasing diversity, and to enabling its students’ spiritual development.
You’ll feel right at home in Durham, North Carolina, a progressive, diverse, and rapidly growing city with a vibrant and active Jewish community. The Durham-Chapel Hill area is home to a number of distinct congregations, a local Jewish Federation, a Jewish Community Center, and myriad other Jewish community organizations, so our students never lack for opportunities to connect with the larger Jewish community.

BE IN TOUCH

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