

Who is eligible to participate in the Rabbinic Certificate in Gerontology and Palliative Care?

This program is designed for rabbis, cantors, chaplains, Jewish educators, rabbinical students, and cantorial students. A small number of other professionals serving the Jewish community may be considered for the program.

How is will this program advance my career?

Clergy are frequently called on to assist congregants with issues around getting older and aging, serious illness, the health issues affecting older adults, and end-of-life care. Often, clergy lack the knowledge and skill base to effectively and comfortably discuss, guide, and advise congregants when these issues arise, especially in times of crisis. For example:

- Considering options that facilitate independent community living for as long as possible
- Assisting families to manage transitions of care, including difficult discussions about the option of long-term care
- Guiding discussions about advance care planning for serious illness and end-of-life care

Clergy will gain knowledge and skills to better assist older adults and their families manage these challenging concerns.

These skills are transferable for clergy who also seek career opportunities in agencies that hire clergy and chaplains. These may include long-term care facilities, hospitals, hospices, community organizations, and others.

Can I participate in this program while I work full-time?

This flexible program is designed for working rabbis and professionals. As an on-line program, participants can work on courses wherever they are at (in the U.S. or internationally) and at whatever times work best for them. Thus, program activities can be flexibly scheduled around professional, family, and personal activities.

What is the roadmap for completing the Certificate Program?

This program can be completed within a year. Two courses will be offered for each 8-week “semester,” with a short break between terms. We obtain guidance from an Advisory Council to assure that courses are not scheduled around the busiest times for congregational rabbis and clergy. While it is most ideal for participants to progress at the recommended pace, participants may decide to move along at a slower pace, taking less than 2 classes during a semester.

What is the curriculum?

Participants will take 6 courses of 3-credits each, for a total of 18 graduate-level credits. The courses include:

- Basic Counseling with Individuals, Families and Groups
- Philosophical Foundations of the Helping Professions
- Social Gerontology
- Palliative Care: Social Work Practice with Serious Illness
- Coping with Loss
- Aging in the Jewish Community

(Descriptions for each of these courses are at the end of this fact sheet.)

In addition, a 1-day program is scheduled in New York in the summer of 2020, to allow for workshops, networking, and personal meetings.

Do I receive a recognized credential for completing this program?

The Rabbinic Certificate Program in Gerontology and Palliative Care has approved by the New York State Department of Education as a free-standing professional certificate for clergy.

Can I apply Certificate course credits to a Master's in Social Work (MSW) at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work-Yeshiva University?

Yes. This 6 course, 18-credit certificate may be applied in full towards an MSW degree at Yeshiva University. These students will have completed many of required courses and electives that comprise the 60-credit MSW degree and may desire to continue in the MSW program by taking the remaining required courses and field instruction. Students who complete the MSW program will be eligible for the social work exam to become a licensed mental health professional. Students who wish to pursue an MSW should discuss this with the director at application, or early in their program if that is possible. (Please note that students interested in the MSW degree take the MSW version of the Counseling Skills course, on-line or in-person.)

Can I receive credit for similar courses taken in other graduate/professional programs or Clinical Pastoral Education?

Yes. Students may be waived from taking one course in this program if they have taken a similar, graduate-level class at another accredited program. Students are asked to provide the syllabus for the class to be considered for waiver; faculty will review the syllabus with the student and make a determination if the course is mostly similar to our course.

Are these courses transferrable to other university/professional programs?

Each university program maintains its own standards for accepting credits earned outside their program. These credits may be applied at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work's MSW program. Students who wish to apply these credits at other schools of social work, or at Clinical Pastoral Education programs, should request guidance directly from these programs.

What are the tuition costs for attending this program?

Due to very generous scholarship support from a New York foundation and Yeshiva University, a very significant percentage of tuition costs are covered by scholarships.

For participants entering the Certificate Program in 2019-2020, **tuition is \$810 per course (for each of 6 courses, for total of \$4,860 for the entire program).** For current rabbinic and cantorial students, **tuition is \$500 per course (for each of 6 courses, for a total of \$3,000 for the entire program).**

A non-refundable deposit of \$50 will secure your place in the program.

How do I apply for the program?

A very brief application is available on our website. Applicants are also required to submit their CV/resume with their application.

To discuss this program further, contact:

Lynn Levy, PhD, Assistant Director, at llevy1@yu.edu

Gary Stein, JD, MSW, Director, at GLStein@yu.edu

Course Descriptions

Basic Counseling with Individuals, Families and Groups: Working with families and individuals on difficult life issues requires therapeutic skill. This course offers clergy the conceptual, practical, theoretical and ethical frameworks and foundations that inform counseling relationships.

Philosophical Foundations of the Helping Professions: The themes of this course provide a unique lens through which clinicians, educators and clergy members may develop their own philosophy of helping as they minister to their communities and spheres of influence at the critical and pivotal stage of later life. The content of this course will provide a spiritual, biblical and philosophical framework that can be uniquely applied to individuals at the later stages of life when individuals and families may confront illness, frailty, loss, and suffering.

Social Gerontology: The world population is growing older at an unprecedented pace. By 2030 over 20 percent of the US population will be old. This demographic trend represents enormous challenges and opportunities for older adults, their families, communities and professionals. This course introduces clergy to the range of social services available to families, policies that will impact older adults, types of living arrangements families may experience, and how to navigate familial changes that accompany aging. In addition, clergy will be introduced to Alzheimer's disease and dementias that are of growing concern in caring for older adults.

Palliative Care - Social Work Practice with Serious Illness: This course provides a comprehensive study of issues related to palliative and end-of-life care. Palliative care, provided to individuals and their families from birth to old age, integrates an interdisciplinary approach to caring for individuals facing life-limiting and serious chronic illness. We also teach clergy how to work with older adults, families and communities and integrate medical, psychosocial, legal, ethical, and spiritual perspectives.

Coping with Loss: This class addresses loss as a phenomenon in the life cycle that all people experience. We explore the theoretical base for understanding and addressing the psychosocial aspects of loss, death and bereavement and examine how to strengthen the coping skills of grieving individuals, families and groups. We help clergy to integrate theory of loss and bereavement with ritual and religious practice that can be healing growth producing.

Aging in the Jewish Community: This course explores the history of providing services for the elderly in the Jewish community both directly and indirectly. Clergy will develop an awareness of the changing nature of aging, advances in service provision, as well as issues ranging from healthy aging the importance of aging in place, the responsibilities of children to their aging parents, and resources and responses that will enable caregivers and others to make culturally proficient decisions.