I. Course Description

This course is designed to move students toward enhanced self-discovery by challenging them to confirm, confront, and articulate their own values and spiritual and philosophical beliefs. The classroom environment is to become a living learning environment that challenges students to confront beliefs and values different from their own, engage with others in an informed and authentic manner, and in the process, discover the very value system that they bring to the clients with whom they work.

The philosophical content, anchored in Jewish social thought, elucidates the social work philosophy of helping. Students who are not Jewish are expected to investigate and articulate their differences with Judaic thought and contribute them to the class, thereby strengthening their own value system and spiritual beliefs. The basic purpose of this course is for students to develop a philosophy of helping by struggling with their spiritual identity and applying it to social work practice.

In this course, such philosophical themes as spirituality, the dual nature of the human being, conflicting conceptions of time, good and the problem of evil, loss and suffering, the Holocaust and other genocides, sin and repentance/behavior change, and social justice are studied from the value perspectives of Judaism, other religions and philosophies, and social work. Students who are Jewish or who subscribe to other religions or philosophies are encouraged to explore in class and in their final paper their own philosophies in relation to these themes. Spiritual/religious and professional systems of thought, anchored in Judaism and social work, are studied in the course of understanding the complexity of human nature. Conflicts and similarities are highlighted.

The focus of the course is on acquiring specific knowledge and on examining values. It is organized around the following questions: What is the essence of being human? What is the role of time in human functioning? How do human beings deal with the problem of evil, and how do students and clients explain tragedy and pain? Where was God during the Holocaust and other acts of genocide and natural disasters - the crisis of faith? What is the process of behavior change for people who are unhappy with their lives? How can social justice effect social change? The goal is for students to develop conceptions of human nature – a philosophy of helping - that they can apply in their work with clients.

This is a required course for all second year students, located in the Human Behavior and Social Environment sequence. Students should have worked with clients and client systems for a year and been exposed to a range of problems and issues in social work practice. They are expected to gain insight into their experiences through the application of philosophical concepts. The course
further develops themes in the Human Behavior course as we apply the duality of human beings to the stages of the life cycle and the development of the professional self. It connects to the practice courses, as students share their practice experiences to develop new ways of viewing clients and their problems. It incorporates content from Social Welfare Organization in studying the concept of social justice in social work and religion. It includes elements of feminism, substance abuse, battered women, child abuse, the elderly and minorities which are cited to illustrate various ways of understanding human nature. Research is cited in studies of behavior change.

II. Course Competency Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Confirm, confront, and articulate their own spirituality, values, and philosophical beliefs with regard to human nature in general, and to their personal lives in particular (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.1).

2. Articulate diverse conceptions of human beings from various religious and spiritual perspectives and how they influence human behavior. (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.4).

3. Appreciate the impact of time on human beings, and the challenges to social workers’ use of time in practice in a managed care environment. (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.9.)

4. Analyze the issues involved in evaluating client behavior. (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.7).

5. Develop sensitivity to the experience of loss and suffering in the life of the individual and the community such as the Holocaust, other genocides, and natural disasters (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.9).

6. Compare religious and social work perspectives on the process of behavior change (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.7).

7. Integrate spirituality into a philosophy of helping (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.1).

8. Articulate the religious and spiritual values in social justice (CSWE competency 2.1.5).

9. Compare the values deriving from Judaism and other religions with the student's own religious/ethnic group, and with those of social work (CSWE advanced competency 2.1.1).

10. Appreciate ethnic, religious, cultural, and gender diversity (CSWE competency 2.1.4).

III. Disabilities
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, akelsen@yu.edu, (646) 592-4280 during the first week of class. Once you have been approved for accommodations, please contact your professor directly to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations.

IV. Instructional Methods

Learning will occur through a variety of methods and experiences, but mainly through a dialogical interchange of ideas, questions and answers. Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek answers to the challenging course material.

V. Required Text

* Available on E-RES


VI. Assignments

A. First assignment

The purpose of this paper is twofold: to apply philosophical concepts to situations of everyday life, and to understand common experiences from a philosophical perspective. Use APA style. Proofread your paper and use spell check and grammar check to correct misspelled words and grammatical errors. This assignment fulfills objectives 1, 2, 8 and 10 as it enables you to begin to formulate conceptions of human beings in society in the process of your integrating spirituality into a philosophy of helping.

Select one of the following topics:

- communication
- religion
- death
- friendship
- love
- parent-child relationship
- spirituality
- search for meaning
- self-actualization
- sex
Discuss the topic from the following perspectives:

a) Briefly review Soloveitchik's typology of human nature in *The Lonely Man of Faith.* (one or two pages maximum)

b) Apply the typology to the topic, i.e., how you understand your chosen topic from the perspective of *Adam I* and *Adam II.*

c) Compare and/or contrast Soloveitchik's views with those of another philosopher or theorist who work relates to your topic. The philosopher or theorist may be from the course readings or one that is acceptable to your professor.

d) Discuss the relevance of this topic for you both personally and professionally.

Literary documentation is expected. Use APA style. Six pages. Proofread paper for spelling and grammar errors before submitting. Due around the seventh session of the class.

**B. Final Assignment**

The purpose of this paper is to integrate the themes of the course and to help you to apply religious/spiritual/philosophical values to social work values and practice.

This assignment fulfills objectives 1, 2, 8 and 10 of the course. In this paper, you are asked to integrate knowledge and values from your religious/ethnic group, compare them to social work philosophy and practice, and articulate your own values. In stating your philosophy of helping, you need to articulate your conception of human beings, how you use yourself in the helping relationship, and how this influences your role as a professional.

Select one of the philosophical themes of the course, i.e. Dual Nature of Man, Time, Gender, Loneliness, Good and Evil, Sin and Repentance, and Social Justice. Other sub-themes may be acceptable, but you must gain approval from the professor first.

1. Trace the origins of your topic in the sources of your own religious/ethnic/spiritual philosophy.
2. Document its relevance to social work values; how social work understands with this topic, and social work interventions that may apply to the topic.
3. **Apply the topic and your understanding of this topic to a client or a client system. This is**
the critical section of the paper as it reflects your creativity.

4. Discuss this topic’s influence on your philosophy of helping – how you see your clients and how this influences the way you work with clients.

Literary documentation is expected. 8-10 pages. Use APA style.
Proofread your paper and use spell check and grammar check to correct misspelled words and grammatical errors.

VII. Evaluation

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Class participation is essential for learning and testing one's ideas. Students are expected to do the required readings. Attendance will also be considered. Student performance is evaluated through grades that will be based on 1) the first paper on the duality of human nature (30%), 2) the final paper to achieve the objectives of the course (40%), and 3) participation in class discussion (30%).

VIII. Plagiarism

Students should remember that the school does not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else’s work as his or her own is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another’s work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another’s work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as one’s own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else’s work. However, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of the assignment in this course will FAIL the course, and will be referred to the Associate Dean automatically for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

Course Schedule

Readings with an * are on E-RES

Unit I. Introduction to Course: Spirituality and Religion (Sessions 1-3)
Covers learning objectives 1 and 2

Learning Themes

1. Attitudes about taking a "Jewish" course.
2. Content and structure of course.
3. Objectives and expectations.
4. The role of spirituality in life and in social work.
and writings from other religions.
6. Chapters I and II in Genesis.

Readings

Bible. Chapters I and II in Genesis.

Readings:


Unit II. The Nature of the Human Being: Sessions 4-7
Covers learning objectives 1, 2, 8, 10,

Learning Themes:

Session #4 - man and woman as created beings; the two creation stories in Genesis and their implications for an understanding of human nature; the spiritual quality of the human experience.

Readings


Session #5 - the individual as a majestic being; relationship to God, relationship between the sexes, creativity and productivity, the natural community. The client and social worker as Adam I.

Readings


Session #6 - the individual as a spiritual being; relationship between the sexes, feminism,
relationship to God; existential loneliness; the spiritual, faith community. The client and social worker as Adam IIs.

Readings


Session #7 - the dual nature of the human being in dynamic interaction - Adam I and Adam II in the same individual. Applying the Adam I-II typology to social phenomena, developmental life stages, and social work.

Readings:


Unit 3. Time - (Session 8)
Covers learning objective 4

Learning Themes:

Conceptions of time - religious, philosophical, sociological, historical and contemporary; time as linear; time as cyclical; time phases and the social worker; the concept of process; time in a managed care environment.

Readings:
Unit IV. Good and Evil: (Sessions 9-10)
Covers Learning Objectives 5, 6

Learning Themes:

1. Conceptions of good and evil in Judaism and other religions.

Readings


2. The "good" and "bad" client – making value judgments about client behavior.

**Readings**


3. Theodicy - the religious legitimation of evil. How clients and social workers explain suffering and personal tragedy, or, why bad things happen to good people.

**Readings**


**Unit V. Faith after the Holocaust, other genocides and natural disasters.** (Session 11)

**Readings**


4. The role of the social worker with survivors and children

Readings


Zilberfein, F. (1993). Helping Holocaust survivors with the impact of illness and
hospitalization: Social work role. Social Work in Health Care, 18 (1) 59-70.


Unit VI. Sin and Repentance: The Psychology of Behavior Change: (Sessions 12-13)
Covers learning objectives 1, 2, 7, 8

Learning Themes:

1. Definition of sin; the impact of "sinful" behavior on the personality; the social worker's observation of clients' behaviors.

Readings


Linzer, N. The nature of man in Judaism and social work. (Chapter 5.)


2. Repentance – Teshuvah - the process of behavior change in religion and social work

Readings


**Unit VII - Social Justice** (Session 14)
Covers learning objectives 1, 2, 8, 9, 10

**Learning themes:**
Social justice in Judaism and other religions

**Readings**


Maimonides, M. Laws of gifts to the poor. *Mishneh Torah._


**Unit VII. Summary and evaluation (Session 14)**
Supplemental Bibliography


