SWK 6136
JEWISH RESPONSE TO COMMUNAL NEEDS
FALL 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The context of people’s lives is an important determinant of their identity, attitudes and behavior. Both internal and external forces compete for primacy in individuals’ understanding of their role, commitment, and responsibility to their community. Ethnic group identification is a powerful force for individuals and their interlocking systems, such as family and peer group, often acting within the constraints of the political, religious and economic realities of the larger environment. Throughout history, there have been social and religious groups that have had to organize their own communal structures for the sake of their own well-being and survival. This course focuses on developing an understanding of what constitutes Jewish identity for North American Jews today, their struggle to accommodate multiple roles and identities, the unique needs and issues for a people living in the Diaspora, and the ways in which the Jewish community has organized and responded to those needs.

This course will address the changing nature of Jewish identity for North American Jews from both historical and modern perspectives. It will explore the many complex issues associated with Jewish identity and engagement in the twenty-first century including the changing Jewish family the role of women in both the family system and the larger Jewish community, the effects of intermarriage and assimilation on the Jewish community, immigration patterns of the Jewish people, and the ways in which the Jewish community has organized itself to provide for its members. This course will also address the role of the religious denominations in the North American Jewish community and the role that Israel plays in connecting North American Jews to Jews in the homeland and around the world and in strengthening their Jewish identity.

This course is an elective and represents the first course in the Certificate Program in Jewish Communal Service.

COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate a range of competencies related to the course objectives. Students will demonstrate their ability to:

1. Understand the changing nature of Jewish identity in contemporary North America (EPAs# 2.1.3 a & 2.1.4 b,c)

2. Recognize the centrality of one’s ethnic and religious background in formulating one’s identity (EPAs# 2.1.2 a & 2.1.4 b)
3. Understand the relationship between the ethnic/religious group and the wider society, utilizing the concepts of boundaries, dissonance, and choice (EPAs# 2.1.4 b,c & 2.1.7 b)

4. Appreciate the unique circumstances that compelled Jews to immigrate to America, and the challenges of acculturation, accommodation, and assimilation to the larger American society (EPAs# 2.1.4 a-c & 2.1.7 b)

5. Gain insight into the ideologies of the three major religious movements, their origins, differences and internal schisms and challenges they each face to meet the religious, spiritual, and cultural needs of Jews in modern American society (EPAs# 2.1.3 a & 2.1.4 b,c)

6. Become knowledgeable about the changing dynamics of the Jewish family; how we define family in the twenty-first century; and the role of women in both the family and the larger Jewish community (EPAs# 2.1.3 a,b & 2.1.9 a)

7. Apply knowledge about how the organized Jewish community, i.e, the Jewish Federation and communal agency systems, responds with services and programs that specifically target discrete groups within the Jewish community (EPAs# 2.1.9 a)

8. Demonstrate competence in analyzing Jewish community population studies and identifying the needs that emerge from changes in Jewish demographics, identity and engagement patterns (EPAs# 2.1.6 a,b)

9. Appreciate the role of Israel in shaping American Jewish identity, connecting Jews around the world to one another, and the evolving changes in Israel-Diaspora relations. (EPAs# 2.1.9 a,b)

PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the School will 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 work 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 your 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 any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth
dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkoehl1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

E-RES (Electronic Reserve)
Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

How do I Use E-RES?
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author.
4. Click on the link to your course.
5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor.
6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html
LEARNING METHODS

Learning will occur through a variety of methods and experiences including lecture, class presentations, guest speakers, class field trips where applicable, films, and small group discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Readings

Most course readings can be found on e-res. Other relevant documents and articles will be handed out as supplemental readings for the sessions.

B. Assignments

1. First Paper (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3)

This paper explores the role that an individual’s ethnic and religious background has on shaping her/his identity, values and personal choices. The student will use this information as a platform toward professional practice in the Jewish community in service to clients on the individual, group, or communal levels.

Write a five-page paper on the topic, “How my ethnic and religious backgrounds have shaped my identity and influenced my personal and professional choices in life.” Include citations from at least three sources from the Jewish Identity section of the syllabus including citations from the article by Steve Cohen, “Identity and Jewish education”.

(EPAs# 2.1.1 b,c & 2.1.2 a)

2. Group Presentation (Learning Objective 5)

Students will participate in a group assignment examining one of the three major religious movements in North America. Presentations will be made in class in the format of a panel discussion. Guidelines for the group presentation will be distributed in class.

(EPAs# 2.1.3 a,c & 2.1.4 b,c)

3. Final Paper (Learning Objectives 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

Select a prominent social issue currently affecting members of the North American Jewish community. Choose from among those discussed in class or another that represents unmet (or undermet) needs in the Jewish community. Discuss the nature and scope of the need, who identifies it as a need, who is affected, and what the ramifications are for the larger Jewish community, and the ways in which the organized Jewish community is responding to it. In your conclusion, discuss your personal reflections on the issue (the current conceptualization and communal responses to the need) from a religious, ethnic, and professional perspective as a social worker. You may include an outline of your own recommendations for addressing this issue. This paper requires you to demonstrate your understanding of a particular need or
challenge facing individual Jews or the community in general and how the Jewish community mobilizes to address it.

The paper should be 10-12 content pages and include citations from a minimum of five sources, at least two from outside the Required Readings. The paper must be double-spaced and written and organized according to APA style. Please carefully proofread for spelling and grammatical errors.

(EPAs# 2.1.4 a,b & 2.1.8 a,b)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. If a student will be late or must miss a class, they must let the professor know prior to the class. Class participation is essential for learning and testing one’s ideas. Students are expected to do the required readings and contribute to the class discussions. Grades are based primarily on written assignments and class participation, but attendance will also be considered. Late papers will be accepted at the discretion of the professor and the student may incur a lower grade, as a result.

WRITING CENTER

Free help with writing your papers is available at the YU Writing Center, in Furst Hall room 202. You can receive individual tutoring that can support your writing for this course. Make an appointment and find out about drop-in hours at www.yu.edu/writingcenter.

GRADING

1) First paper 15%
2) Final paper 50%
3) Group Presentation 20%
4) Class Participation 15%

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit I. Introduction to the Course – Foundations of Jewish Identity
Session 1

1. Course objectives, requirements and expectations
2. Structure and content of course
3. Introduction to Jewish communal service
Required Reading:


Session 2 The components of Jewish identity

1. The definition of Jewish identity today
2. The nature of religion and ethnicity and their roles in people’s lives
3. Relationships between ethnic groups and the larger society, utilizing the concepts of boundaries, dissonance, and choice
4. Contemporary Jewish identity - Changing dynamics – Trigger Film

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Sessions 3 & 4 - The Jews as an Ethnic/Religious Group

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Unit II. History of the Jews in America
Sessions 5 & 6

Students will view a film on the Jewish immigrant experience and its impact on the family and communal life. This will be followed by a class discussion.

1. Immigrants’ motivations to come to America
2. Challenges faced by the different groups and their responses.
3. Institutions established to ward off assimilatory tendencies and preserve Jewish life.
5. The impact of the immigrant groups on contemporary Jewish life.

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Unit III. The Religions of American Jews
Sessions 6 & 7 – Group Presentations

1. The ideologies of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Judaism.
2. Policies of each group pertaining to Jewish identity, Jewish family, conversion, homosexuality, women, and outreach to the intermarried.
3. Current conflicts and challenges facing the religious movements.

Required Reading:


Unit IV. The Jewish Family
Sessions 8 & 9

1. The family as the primary socializing institution in the Jewish community.
2. The changing role of Jewish women; the impact of feminism.
4. Intermarriage and its impact on the family.
5. Jewish communal responses to family breakdown and intermarriage.

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Rosen, G. (1994). The impact of the women's movement on the Jewish family. [http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ea7fdac4-1b1d-44ce-bead-c66b630e05b9%40sessionmgr113&vid=2&hid=123](http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ea7fdac4-1b1d-44ce-bead-c66b630e05b9%40sessionmgr113&vid=2&hid=123)


See [www.Interfaithfamily.com](http://www.Interfaithfamily.com) for articles on Jewish adoption, transcultural and transracial adoption, infertility, and gay and lesbian adoption in the Jewish community.
Unit V. Introduction to the Structure of the American Jewish Community and Jewish Communal Agencies.
Sessions 9 & 10

1. Jewish values underlying the organization of Jewish life.
2. From mitzvah to voluntarism as a characteristic of Jewish communal life.
3. National, international, and local organizations: their interrelationships and their responses to communal needs.
4. Social work in Jewish communal service.
5. Social work ethics and values as they impact on-going work within the Jewish organizational structure.
6. Understanding the nature of the lay/professional relationship

Required Reading:


Helping Others in Need: A Brief History of the Federated System http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=1039&page=1


Suggested Reading:


Unit VI. Jewish Population Studies: Analysis and Comparison of Local Jewish Community Population Studies and National Portraits of Jewish Americans

1. Policy Implications
2. New Engagement Strategies and Initiatives
3. Shifting Philanthropic Priorities

Sessions 11 & 12
Required Reading:

The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 (Handouts)  

http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/

Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.  

Magid, Shaul. (November 20, 2014). Why the Jewish now (and future) can’t be confined to the paradigms of the past. ZEEK Presented by Forward.  
http://zeek.forward.com/articles/118426/

Mijal, Bitton & Cohen, S.M. (May 1, 2015). More is better when it comes to Jewish numbers.  
Forward.

Pew Research articles in Forward and Jewish Week

Highlights of Local Community Studies (hand outs)

Suggested Reading:


Unit VII. Israel and American Jews Session 13

1. American Jews’ views of Israel.  
2. Israel as a catalyst for strengthening Jewish identity.  
3. The changing image of Israel for American Jews.  
4. The impact of the peace process on American Jews.

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Unit VIII. Summary and Evaluation
Session 14
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


