Proseminar in Jewish Communal Leadership

Social Work 692/695, Fall 2013

Wednesday, 5:00-8:00, Room 4700 SSWB

Mission Statement: “The JCLP cohort of 2013-2014 is committed to honoring Jewish values and making a difference. We will respectfully engage with each other and the Jewish community in Ann Arbor and Metro Detroit at all times by upholding our values of critical thought, compassion and integrity. All members of the cohort will show up prepared to participate, listen to and support each other so that everyone feels comfortable taking risks. By committing ourselves to the well-being of the group, we make an investment in each other’s growth and well-being, even in the most difficult of circumstances.”

From contributions of JCLP 2013-14 Orientation retreat participants.

Course Description:

The professional seminar in Jewish communal leadership provides a critical space within the Jewish Communal Leadership Program for students to engage with the issues shaping contemporary Jewish community. It is an arena in which we try to integrate the different approaches to knowledge, skills and experience -- acquired in SSW and Judaic studies courses, through community experience, and in board and field placements. It offers opportunities for participants to meet with relevant professional and lay community leaders, to explore the relationship of personal and professional identities, to work collaboratively on soliciting and addressing communal problems gathered from the field, to generate and execute public programming related to Jewish communal issues, to consult with SSW faculty about the application of Social Work approaches to Jewish communal problems, and to gather peer feedback and establish relationships with each other.

The seminar invites students to take the wide view of Jewish community and general societal concerns from the perspective of Jewish communal interests and social work values. It asks students to bring critical thinking, Judaic Studies content, personal experience, and the perspectives and skills of Social Work study and practice to address Jewish communal concerns. It challenges students to engage with issues of pluralism – addressing the place of Jewish community in a diverse society and the challenges of diversity within the Jewish community.

As the academic home for the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, the proseminar offers a forum for grappling with the challenges facing the Jewish community within its broader societal context.
**Course Objectives:**
The proseminar and related co-curricular JCLP activities are focused on enabling students to:

a. Gain familiarity with the historical antecedents, contemporary organizational structures, and critical problems defining contemporary Jewish community

b. Combine appropriate modes of practice, analysis and knowledge drawn from both Social Work and Judaic Studies to discuss and address communal issues.

c. Integrate relevant professional and Judaic studies course work with board and field placement experiences, and connect these with emerging career interests.

d. Establish relationships and interact professionally with lay and professional leaders in Jewish communal service, relevant sub-fields, and allied occupational settings. Benefit from their leadership narratives and learn from their approach to communal work and issues.

e. Develop their voice, self-presentation, and perspectives as emerging professional leaders.

f. Work together to create an open and exciting class forum for the discussion of challenging issues in a safe environment.

g. Frame big questions and present public forums to draw the broader community into significant conversations about the American Jewish present and future.

h. Begin to bring their voices to bear on the broader discourse of concerns and debates animating today’s American Jewish community.

**Student Responsibilities, Assignments, Assessment, and Opportunities:**

All students are responsible for the highest level of academic integrity. Students must submit only their own work and cite all sources of ideas and information taken from other sources. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

If there are any special circumstances that I and/or the class should know to allow you to participate fully, please consult with me about them so that we can make appropriate adaptations.

*Student assessment will be based on class participation (40%), journal reflections (40%), and co-curricular engagement beyond the classroom (20%). For those involved in planning and presentation of larger community-based JCLP projects (like the Communal Conversations), the percentages will shift to class (30%), journal (30%) and community-based projects (40).*
**Class Participation**  The course depends and JCLP experience in general depends upon the active participation of all students. This includes regular, prompt attendance. Please let me know if you must miss a class – more than two absences may result in a failing grade. Please see norms/mission statement/expectations statement as guidelines for participation in class and outside of it. Positive, engaged participation and thoughtful journal responses that explore and develop themes raised in class discussions are both ways to demonstrate “active participation.”

**Kavannah, intention, D’var Torah, text reflection**

Each student will introduce and close one class session during the semester with a brief intention (kavannah). You might begin class with a short text, teaching, or observation – it can relate to the theme or visitor of the day, but this is not required. This should take no more than 3 minutes. The student assigned for that class will also be responsible for closing the session with concluding thoughts … you may solicit input from other students, but we will try to reserve not more than 5 minutes for this concluding piece.

**Journal**

Students will keep a narrative record of their learning and experience in the context of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program. The journal may be constructed in whatever format is most conducive to each individual’s writing, learning, and assessment style. Journal entries should be composed at a minimum of once per week whether or not we have class. They may focus on questions, thoughts, and experiences that arise within the proseminar, Judaic Studies, or Social Work classes, or that emerge in the context of community involvement, holiday observances, family matters, field placements etc. Students will maintain this journal throughout the program and will, ideally, use this exercise as a place to capture their journey over two years and to integrate their experiences across the different facets of their academic program and community engagement.

Journals may be used to further reflect upon in-class discussions (this should go beyond simply your notes from the discussion); experiences in field placement, other classes, or other community settings; to ponder communal questions; to reflect upon your own interests and development; to raise questions for yourself or for the program. They should be more than descriptive – journal entries offer opportunities to further engage with opinions that are different than your own, reflect upon styles of leadership or presentation, synthesize learnings from complex conversations, process your own contributions, or reflect upon the impact of class or community engagements on one’s own professional identity or questions.

Students will submit their journals at different points during the semester. Cumulative journal entries should be submitted by 5 pm on:

1. October 18, 2013
2. November 8, 2013
3. December 16, 2013
Community-Based Programs and Engagement:

Second-year students will be responsible for organizing and presenting a “Communal Conversation” during the Winter semester that will represent JCLP’s signature public program(s) for the year. It should be ambitious in scope and topic and engage the broader community in a compelling program and conversation. Ideally JCLP Communal Conversations invite the broader community to consider questions found at the intersection of academic and community interests. The 2013-2014 theme chosen by the second-year students is Jewish Education.

First-year students will be expected to add their voice to the broader community’s public discourse over the course of this academic year – this could be via a response to a Request for Proposals, a grant application, blog entry, contest submission, website, publishing opportunity, or planning of a small community program. Students may work by themselves or with other JCLP students, but additional participation should be proportional to the effort required by the project. Students are encouraged to look out for such opportunities and to share them with each other and the instructor.

Conferences

There is funding of up to $750 per student available to attend Jewish community conferences this year. The goal of participation in conferences is to give you a chance to take advantage of the set programs and the serendipitous networking and learning that happens in conference spaces. If you have a conference in mind, please provide me with a one or two paragraph rationale for attending the conference and your anticipated budget. Always check if there are student registration rates or scholarships available.

JCLP Group Norms for 2013/14 as developed by participants at JCLP Orientation Retreat

1. Be on time. Sitting and ready at 5:10, or whatever time is agreed for start of particular class.

2. Come prepared by reading materials and ready to participate.

3. Let others complete their thoughts without interruption.

4. Be brief and to the point to move conversation forward.

5. Stay self-aware of how much time or space you are occupying in a given conversation or opening comment.

6. Be mindful of your posture and overall outward appearance.
7. Communicate outside of class.

8. Invest in the group inside and outside of class.

9. Show active listening through eye contact...Presence = Full Attention

10. Bathroom breaks: be mindful and respectful and know that breaks are coming.

11. Try to find joy in activities, keep the room “light” when possible.

**Technology:** No phones, except at break. Computers are OK if you stay on task, with articles, resources, or taking notes. Be accountable to yourself and each other on this. Be respectful of instructor, guests, and classmates. If you see something, say something, but assume positive intent.

**Strong Emotions in Class:** If you are upset or someone sees that someone else is upset, ask for “Point of Privilege” so that there is an opportunity to review “what just happened here.” Clarifying discussions should not last longer than five minutes. If ill-feeling remains, those involved will, at the end of class, make appointment with instructors or each other (whichever seems more comfortable) to try to address issues. Use “I” statements in these exchanges. Commit to emotional self-regulation.

**Food:** We will take a break (15 minutes), during which time it is fine to eat snacks or meals. Food will be put away before group discussion resumes. Celebrations or special events may involve food in class. Those situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

**Additional Program Expectations:**

Most JCLP responsibilities are a part of the seminar, but there are instances of community engagement outside the time frame that are also considered JCLP priorities. Participation in these programs is considered a part of JCLP requirements, and we expect that students will make a serious effort to attend such events even if they present conflicts or inconvenience. These include:

- orientation events,
- Community Breakfast/Sukkot Open House
- Campus (Sukkot) Open House
- Communal Conversations, and
- Programs planned in different locations on Wednesday evenings that may go beyond the usual 5 – 8 pm timeframe. Students will be made aware of all such programs far in advance.

JCLP is a fellowship that entails both privileges and responsibilities. In the case of these prioritized events, students will be expected to ask their field placement supervisors if they can adjust their hours if they present conflicts. Students will not be expected to miss other classes in order to attend JCLP events.
There will be occasional additional experiences planned such as breakfasts or lunches with visiting Jewish leaders who will not be in town on Wednesday evenings. We also have a meeting for first-year students with representatives of Ann Arbor Jewish organizations and a JCLP visit to Detroit on our agenda for the year. We hope that students will do their best to join in taking advantage of these opportunities.

Proseminar Schedule, Fall 2013

Subject to Change, depending on our guests’ shifting schedules.

1. September 11: Memoirs, Sukkot planning

2. October 2: Susan Crabb (SSW Office of Field Instruction Field Instructor)
   Field Placements and Professional Behaviors

   Developing a high-performing culture in a mission-driven organization.

4. October 16: Foundations of Community

5. October 23: Contemporary Community Challenges

6. October 30: Challenges and Opportunities in Jewish Education

7. November 6: Irwin Kula [President, National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL)]:
   Rethinking Jewish community

8. November 13: Bob Aronson (President, Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life; former CEO, Jewish Federation of Metro Detroit)
   Focus on Fundraising

9. November 20: Community Dinner in Metro Detroit

   [November 27: no class, Thanksgiving]

10. December 4: Reflections: Backwards and Forwards