SSW 692 Seminar in Jewish Communal Leadership

SSW 695 Advanced Proseminar in Jewish Communal Leadership (prerequisite: SSW 692)

Instructor: Dr. Andrea Siegel (ansiegel@umich.edu)

Wednesdays, 5-8pm 4684 SSWB

2 credits

Office Hours: by appointment

Course description (from SSW catalogue):

The professional seminar in Jewish communal leadership provides a critical space within the Jewish Communal Leadership Program curriculum in which students can integrate the very different approaches to knowledge, skills and experience – acquired in their SSW and Judaic studies courses and in their board and field placements – into a coherent whole. The seminar also serves as a setting for the exploration of general societal concerns from the perspective of Jewish communal interests and traditional values, and for bringing the perspectives and skills that are a part of Social Work study and practice to addressing Jewish communal concerns. The seminar serves as the intellectual home for the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, providing the forum in which students will grapple with understanding the Jewish community within its broader societal context. The seminar will also provide a setting for students to apply their Judaic training and their practical skills in evaluation, data analysis, and social relationships to developing analytical approaches to current problems that will be presented by communal agencies for the consideration of JCLP students.

Course content (from SSW catalogue):

This course provides 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 participate in generating 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.
**Course objectives:**

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Draw connections among historical accomplishments of the field of Jewish Communal Service and leadership challenges facing today’s diverse Jewish communities.

2. Articulate how the ideas raised in Social Work and Judaic Studies courses inform their own practice of the Jewish Communal Service profession.

3. Reflect upon their own leadership strengths and challenges and engage in self-correction behaviors, particularly vis a vis ethical role-modeling, lay-professional relations, crisis management, networking, and giving/receiving feedback.

4. Compare the functions of various local, national, and international Jewish institutions across diverse Jewish constituencies; highlight special roles played in American society by Jewish advocacy and education organizations in Washington DC.

5. Discuss best practices in Jewish program planning, execution, and evaluation on the local level.

6. Exhibit selected Jewish cultural competencies through reference to specific practices and vocabularies of Jewish discourses.

**Course design:**

Each meeting will emphasize skill development in structured lessons, often with guest experts. Meetings will consist of multiple parts, flexible as appropriate per lesson plan. In general, we will have the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proseminar Weekly Schedule (adjusted per meeting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:10-5:40pm reading/discussion time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:40-5:45pm break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:45-8pm instruction, with a short break in the middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to regular class meetings requiring active participation, students will learn through reflection, site visits, readings of online media and articles from the field of Leadership Studies.
Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

*Multiculturalism and Social Diversity* is addressed through our site visits in downtown and Metro Detroit, and our discussions of world Jewry.

*Social Justice and Social Change* is addressed through our review of Israeli and American Jewish history, current events, and study of inter/intra-faith coalition building.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research* is addressed through readings students will encounter online about Jewish demography and education, as well as articles from the field of Leadership Studies (especially those produced by University of Michigan’s Center for Positive Organizations).

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* is addressed through our reading on refugeeism and community renaissance in *I Live. Send Help.* and our site visit to Jewish Family Services of Metropolitan Detroit.

Relationship to Social Work Ethics and Values:

This course will emphasize the importance of human relationships for effective leadership. The profession of Jewish Communal Service requires professional knowledge, obtained not only through experience in the field but also through the cultivation of life-long learning (including staying abreast of current events and best practices). Peer consultation and thoughtful deliberative discussion are key components of this course.

Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice:

This course provides a space for 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. We will highlight refugee history, the differences of Jewish communities across the world, the power of Jewish philanthropy, recent rises in anti-Semitism around the world, and the sacrifices made by Jewish communal professionals that honor the Hebrew biblical value: *tzedek, tzedek tirdof* (“justice, justice thou shalt pursue”).
Course requirements

**Prerequisite assignments**

Prerequisite assignments for this seminar were emailed to students over the summer. All students researched community organizations and reviewed American Jewish history.


Incoming students completed an exercise comparing their resumes to early-career job ads in Jewish Communal Service.

**Weekly assignment**

Each week, you will post by Tuesday evening the following to C-Tools:

- A thoughtful critique/commentary of one media piece (1-2 paragraphs). Thus, you will read regularly online Jewish news/blogs (per your choice) such as *Haaretz*, *Tablet*, *The Forward*, *JTA*, *Times of Israel*, and *ejewishphilanthropy.com*. Note that some media require paid subscriptions. The Facebook group JEDLAB often has good links on Jewish education topics. Please include a PDF or Word doc of the original piece as an attachment to your post, as well as a link.
  - Note: I will choose one student’s post to distribute in class each week.
  - Note: Once we return from the GA trip, I may share the posts with a local Jewish lay or professional leader for review. In this way, you benefit from having a ‘different pair of eyes’ reading and evaluating your work. I will remove your name from your post to protect your confidentiality. In rare occasions, if you want to ensure that I do not share your post given the sensitive nature of the topic or your writing, please indicate this in your entry.

**Other assignments**

- *Adapting assignments in other courses to the field of Jewish Communal Service studies*: Look at your syllabi for SSW and Judaic Studies courses at the beginning of the semester. Identify one major assignment from two courses (such as a paper, evaluation assignment, or community-based research proposal) that could be fulfilled with reference to contemporary Jewish communal concerns. Meet with me once during the planning stage to discuss how to maximize the
learning experience. (I can also be an ally for you if you need to approach your professor to explain how you wish to fulfill the assignments.) You will turn in the assignments to your courses. By the end of the semester, post the assignments as well to our class C-Tools site. For our final class meeting on Dec. 10, each student will give an oral presentation of approximately 10 minutes to share results from one of your two completed assignments. If you wish to work on a group project for a course with other JCLP students, that’s fine—and you can do the 10-minute oral presentation together.

- **Readings**: students will be asked to read approximately 5-6 articles over the course of the semester, primarily for the month-long unit in October dedicated to the theme of “Leadership.” The articles will be posted on C-Tools. The first batch of articles will need to be read by October 1st.

**In addition**
- Incoming students will participate in three group site visits on select Fridays in Metro Detroit (recommended for networking, but optional for continuing students).
- Our class will take a trip to the 2014 General Assembly in Washington, DC, Nov. 6-11. Please contact me if you need a note to explain your absence to professors or field instructors. You will probably be able to attend classes on Nov. 6 because our flight leaves late at night.
- Continuing students will:
  - present a 1-2 page current personal leadership challenge case from field for peer consultation once during the semester; the case is due on 10/1 and any cases we do not get to in that class session will be discussed in meetings of 4-5 students outside of class, TBD according to student schedules
  - document on C-Tools your contributions to planning work for the 2015 Communal Conversation

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

This approved syllabus language is taken from: http://ssd.umich.edu/article/syllabus-statement

“If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As
soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.”

**Plagiarism**

Please review the School of Social Work’s information about plagiarism

- [http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.12.02/plagiarism](http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.12.02/plagiarism)
- [http://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity](http://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity)

Rabbinic sources place a high value on the importance of quoting an idea in the name of a given person, through a revered chain of transmission. Please honor this tradition with the highest integrity during your time in JCLP.

**Course Materials:**

- online media you choose to follow
- articles posted on C-Tools (in “Resources”)
- *I Live. Send Help.* Published by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in 2014. Provided to students in class for 9/3 session.
- presenter bios: please read on C-Tools in advance when we have guest presenters.
Course Schedule

The seminar will be divided roughly into theme-based, skill-building, month-long units.

September: Mapping Jewish Life and Jewish Organizations


9/10  No class

Substitute: Sun. 9/14 (10am, dial-in from home): Introduction to Israeli Society
(guest: Eitan Regev, Researcher, Taub Center for Social Policy in Israel; approximately 1 hr. Please upload your notes to C-Tools.)

9/17  Introduction to Contemporary American Jewish Society (guest: David Schoem, U-M Sociology/Judaic Studies). TBD in-class video conference with JCLP/STaR/Drachler alumni working in various Jewish American Jewish communities. Note: I will review your prerequisite assignment on American Jewish history by this date.

9/24  No class (Erev Rosh Hashana holiday)

October: Transformational Leadership

10/1  Giving and Receiving Feedback: The Art of Peer Consultation for Jewish Leadership (guest: Or Mars, Dir. Wexner Graduate Fellowship / Davidson Scholars Program). 2nd-year students: prepare for this class a 1-2 page case on a current leadership dilemma you face in field. (Or Mars will email you directions in advance.) All students: I will post selected articles on C-Tools in early September. Please have them read by this date.

10/8  No class (Erev Sukkot holiday). Please come to JCLP’s Sukkot Open House 10-11:30am—drop in any time


10/22  Lay-Professional Relationships in Jewish Communities (guest: Miryam Rosenzweig, Dir. NEXTGen Detroit, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit)
10/29  **Crisis Management in Jewish Communities** (guest: Bob Aronson, Senior Development Advisor, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit)

**November: Cultivating Your Professional Self, Networking**

11/5  **Skills in Preparation for the 2014 General Assembly** (guest: Lisa Eisen, National Dir. Schusterman Family Foundation)

11/6-11/11  **Trip to DC for the GA** (includes JCLP meetings with: Executive Coach Rae Ringel; Robert Wexler, former US Congressman and current Pres., S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace; educator TBD at US Holocaust Memorial Museum; Rachel Laser, Deputy Dir. of The Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism)

11/12  **No class**

11/19  **Review of Lessons Learned from the GA** (guests: Robin Axelrod, Pres. Ann Arbor Jewish Community Center and Dir. of Education, Detroit Holocaust Memorial Center; David Shtulman, Exec. Dir. Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor)

11/25  **No class** (Thanksgiving Break)

**December: Effective Program Planning and Semester Project Review**

12/3  **Effective Program Planning for Jewish Communities** (guest: Mimi Weisberg, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor)

12/10  **Student Final Oral Presentations**

*Preview of monthly seminar themes for Winter 2014 semester:*

*January: Money Matters in Jewish Life (Ethics/History, Fundraising, Grant Writing, Donor Relations)*

*February: Facilitating Difficult Conversations in Jewish Life (Intermarriage, Israel, etc.)*

*March: Communication for Jewish Communal Service (Writing for Online Media, Effective Meetings, etc.)*

*April: Conclusion*
Site Visit Dates:

Fri. 9/12 Diverse Jewish Communities of Metro Detroit; Downtown Detroit Entrepreneurship (morning, afternoon, evening options)

Friday 9/19 Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit; meet with CEO Perry Ohren (afternoon)

Friday 10/24 Jewish Federation of Metro Detroit; meet with staff, CEO Scott Kaufman, and Alliance for Jewish Education Dir. Jeff Lasday (morning)

Course Grading:

Prerequisite Assignment Completion: 200 points. (Graded for completion only.)

Weekly Media Commentaries: 200 points. (You need to do 10 total for a maximum of 20 points each; 15 points will be awarded for entries that are completed, 20 points will be awarded for superior entries that are truly worthy of public posting or private sharing with major Jewish leaders, depending on the style of your post. If the need arises I may ask you to set up a meeting with SSW’s Writing Coordinator Betsy Williams.)

Active Class Participation: 200 points. (This includes demonstrating focused presence, asking penetrating questions and, likely, taking notes. When appropriate, demonstrate completion of reading articles for class. 20 points awarded per class meeting. If missing class becomes a habit we will need to discuss. Please: no texting, email, Facebook, etc.)

GA Trip Participation: 200 points.

Site Visit Attendance, Case Preparation and Participation, Communal Conversation Contribution: 100 points. (Incoming students: 30 points per site visit, plus 10 points for participating in peer consultation outside of class. Continuing students: 30 points for case preparation, 20 points for participating in peer consultation outside of class, and 50 points for Communal Conversation contribution.)

Final Oral Presentation: 100 points. (Presentation should be engaging, thoughtful; students please avoid reading from slides; maximum five PowerPoint slides allowed.)

Total: 1000 points