



Professor Karla Goldman

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Office Hours by Appointment

Proseminar in Jewish Communal Leadership

Social Work 692/695, Fall 2015

Wednesday, 5:00-8:00, Room 1794 SSWB

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 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.

Theme for 2015-16: Boundaries, Difference and Self (with a focus on Israel/Palestine/American Jewish community)

Purpose: To become professionals prepared to help communities engage with their most challenging issues.

Outcomes:

- **Gaining better knowledge and understanding of issues related to Boundaries, Difference, and Self in the Jewish community.**
- **Encountering, examining, and developing skills and strategies useful in engaging with difficult issues including active listening, critical reading, intergroup dialogue, and group process, dealing with provocative topics and personal emotional triggers.**
- **Becoming better able to understand, process, channel, and help others respond to media coverage and communal debate over "hot" topics.**

Process:

- **Listening to, engaging with, and examining perspectives from thoughtful leaders engaged in challenging issues in Jewish community.**
- **Engaging in learning process with one's peers in seminar conversations, on-line exchange, and discussions outside of class.**
- **Gaining experience and expertise in critical reading of texts and media addressing difficult topics.**
- **Creating and participating in public forums that offer meaningful engagement around substantive issues in Jewish communal life.**

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. SSW policies on plagiarism can be found here: <http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.13.02/23/plagiarism>

Accommodations for Disabilities: 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. If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Please advise me in advance of any anticipated absences from class. Since we have a limited number of class sessions this term, more than one absence would be of concern. *You are responsible for any assignments or announcements shared due to absence from class.*

Class Preparation and Participation

Assigned readings to be prepared before class will be provided to us by guest speakers.

The course and JCLP experience in general depends upon the *active participation* of all students. Regular, prompt attendance, positive, engaged participation, focused attention and active listening, and thoughtful journal responses that explore and develop themes raised in class discussions are both ways to demonstrate “active participation.” Note-taking is important and may be conducted on a lap-top, unless and until we encounter problems with on-line distractions. Please: no texting, email, Facebook, etc.

Total Points available: 225 (25 points per class session)

On-line media discussion

In order to develop our critical reading and group processing muscles, we will be conducting weekly on-line discussion (via Canvas) of topical articles related to our course themes. Each week, one student will be responsible for choosing an article (in consultation with me), posting it along with discussion questions, and will then be responsible for overseeing the on-line conversation. Every student is responsible for responding to the on-line question or questions by Saturday midnight following the initial posting.

Over the course of the semester, students should increasingly integrate perspectives and knowledge that in class and in through our group process in their on-line responses. After the discussion period is closed, the presenter of the article should present a summary of the conversation and what she considered the most important questions and insights that emerged from the discussion in her journal.

Schedule:

1. Pay attention to media in the week before you are responsible for facilitating on-line conversation. Identify 3 -5 articles that you think would lead to useful conversation and

send them to me in your preferred rank order by Wednesday at noon. I will look at articles and give my take on what might work best for our purposes by seminar time. Students will post article for discussion by Thursday at noon.

2. All other students will respond to article and posted questions by Saturday at midnight.
3. Students should respond to discussion forum sometime between Sunday morning and Tuesday at midnight.

See on-line media assignment sheet for additional instructions and specific breakdown of rubric for contributions.

Total points available: 260 (20 for each response to posted reading/media and for student posting article for discussion). (See assignment sheet for specific rubric for assessment)

Journal

Students will use a journal exercise to track their evolving understanding of the meaning of Boundaries, Difference, and Self in Jewish life and community. The journal may be constructed in whatever format is most conducive to each individual's writing, learning, and assessment style. Journal entries may respond to class discussion, the on-line media assignment, their experiences in the community, or simply in reading the newspaper, watching or listening to the news, talking to friends, or in processing what they see on their Facebook feeds. Entries may reflect their notes on class discussions or articles they've read but they should be more 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 how questions under discussion are interacting with your own professional identity or questions.

Journal entries should be composed at a minimum of once per week beginning the week of September 16 through the week of December 9.

Students will submit their journals at different points during the semester. Cumulative journal entries should be submitted (via Canvas, she said hopefully) by 5 pm on:

1. October 23, 2015
2. November 13, 2015
3. December 16, 2015

Total points available: 225 (15 for each of 14 entries, with additional 15 points for reflections on article discussion hosted by you).

Site Visits, Community-Based Programs and Engagement : Total Points Available

All students are expected to participate in the Welcome Breakfast, the Sukkot Open House and associated activities, and the GA. Participation in the additional community venues is encouraged.

Second year students will be taking responsibility for a portion of the Limmud Michigan program to be held on March 13, 2016. All the speaker planning for this should take place during the fall semester. Emily Zussman is the lead contact for this work.

Total Points Available: 200 for GA

First year students: 30 for each site visit.

2nd year students: 90 for Limmud planning

Additional points will be awarded for exceptional work in any of these categories.

Conferences

Students are invited to attend Jewish community conferences in addition to the GA this year. We will set aside a limited amount of funding to facilitate this goal. 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 and requested funding. Always check if there are student registration rates or scholarships available.