

Course title:	Jewish Communal Leadership Program	
Course #/term:	SSW 792, Fall, 2021	
Time and place:	Wednesday, 5:15-8 pm, Room #1804	
Credit hours:	2	
Prerequisites:	Permission of instructor	
Instructor:	Alice Mishkin	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
Contact info:	Email: amishkin@umich.edu	Phone: 517-648-8847
	You may expect a response within 48 hours. Please use email rather than phone.	
Office:	4733	
Office hours:	By appointment	

1. Course Statement

Course Description

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. It 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.

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. It 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. 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 Objectives and Competencies

In this seminar, and in co-curricular programming, students will:

1. Gain familiarity with the historical antecedents, contemporary organizational structures, and critical problems that shape American Jewish communities.
2. Combine appropriate modes of practice, analysis and knowledge drawn from both Social Work and Judaic Studies to discuss and address communal issues.
3. Make connections between Social Work and Judaic Studies coursework and field placement experiences, as they consider their developing career interests.
4. Establish relationships and interact professionally with lay and professional leaders in Jewish communal service, relevant sub-fields, and allied occupational settings.
5. Develop their own voice, self-presentation, story, and perspectives as emerging professionals.
6. Work together to create an open, exciting, and mutually supportive class forum for the discussion of challenging issues.
7. Frame big questions and present public forums to draw the broader community into significant conversations about the American Jewish present and future.
8. Add their voices to the broader discourse of concerns and debates animating contemporary American Jewish communities.

Philosophy on Classroom Learning and Teaching

I value personal and collective reflection, and the notion that we are all teachers and learners. I am challenged by the need to balance teaching within the confines of the University, itself an oppressive system, and by my commitment to working against institutional oppression and towards liberation. I believe that transparently and directly articulating this, alongside a clear set of expectations and values, supports a productive learning environment. We will speak in more detail about our classroom guidelines. Below are a few of the philosophies I use to teach that I would like to highlight:

- All of us come to this course with various experiences, skill sets, backgrounds and values. No one set of experiences is “better” or “worse” than any other. It is important that we listen to and consider diverse opinions and perspectives, even those we strongly disagree with.
- Curiosity is the root of growth and learning. Being intellectually curious often means taking risks, asking uncomfortable questions, and engaging deeply with the course material. I expect and encourage us to have open and respectful disagreements and difficult conversations.
- Intellectual integrity and honesty matter. I expect you to use course readings and other learning material to frame and contextualize your opinions. I expect you to build thoughtful and cogent arguments to support your positions.
- The course material will affect each of you in different ways. While I don’t often offer trigger warnings, some of you may experience moments that recall a prior personal, painful, negative or traumatic memory. If you are able, I encourage you to stay with the conversation and the class when these challenging moments occur. If you are not, I encourage you to let me know and/or take care of yourself when these moments occur. I expect that each of you will be cognizant of the impact of your words on your classmates. I expect each of you to assume that your fellow classmates are not intending to purposefully harm or offend with certain language, actions, etc. I know this isn’t always easy.

- This course functions best with open and honest communication. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, comments and concerns.

2. Class Requirements

Class Readings

All course material is available on Canvas. Students are responsible for reading all material. Assigned readings provide the foundation for classroom discussions and assignments and therefore, are required. We may not always discuss specific readings in detail in seminar, but you are responsible for their content and they should frame your thinking as we have class discussions.

I know that depending on your course load, readings can feel overwhelming. Please see me if you are having a hard time keeping up with the required reading for this course and we can discuss any changes that need to be made.

Grading: In Search of Liberation

In my opinion, traditional grading systems deeply minimize deep learning, risk-taking and intellectual rigor and hugely increase stress, anxiety and misery. This makes for irrelevant assessments of your actual learning. My assumption is that you are in this program because you are excited about engaging personally, professionally and academically in the study of Jewish Communal organizing. Thus, I assume the following:

- You will complete assignments thoughtfully and critically, and submit them in a timely manner;
- You will be present and engaged in classroom and co-curricular discussions and activities;
- You will let me know if there are issues happening in or out of the classroom that make it difficult for you to be a fully engaged student.

My hope is that operating with these assumptions, instead of with points and grades and percentages, will allow you to dig deeply into the course material without the stress of worrying about your grades.

Here are the School of Social Work's policies related to grading:

[Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#)

[Student Grievance procedures](#)

[Policy for grading in special circumstances.](#)

Assignments

Assignment #1: Journal Entries

You will use journals to track your evolving engagement with and perspectives on the topics we cover. The journal assignment offers you space to make connections and dig deeper into issues or ideas that arise for you each week. Your journals may be constructed in whatever format is most conducive to your writing, learning, and assessment style. Your journals should be substantive, reflective, intellectual and edited for clarity.

Journals may reflect notes from class discussions or articles read but they should be more than descriptive and should be intellectually engaged. 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, connect or reflect upon how questions under discussion are interacting with other conversations, readings, speakers, classes, or your own professional identity or questions. Journal entries may respond to class discussions, other classes, experiences in the community, reading the newspaper, watching or listening to the news, talking with friends, or processing what you see on your social media feeds.

Your journals should cover the entirety of the semester, and should total twelve entries. That means that at the end of the semester you have reflected on twelve out of the fourteen weeks (though you may journal each week if you'd like).

You will submit their journals at three different points during the semester. Cumulative journal entries should be submitted on Canvas by 11:59 pm on the following dates: Sunday, October 2nd; Sunday, November 6th; and Sunday, December 12th. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I will return your journals to you with feedback within two weeks of your submission.

Assignment #2: Leading Class Discussion

Each student will have the opportunity to facilitate - individually or in pairs - a conversation in class on a topic of your choosing. Some students will lead discussion in the fall semester, and some will lead discussion in the winter semester. You decide when is best for you. When it is your turn to facilitate, you will be responsible for the following:

- Providing appropriate contextual material in advance. This can be readings, videos, podcasts, tweets, etc. The material should both help your peers have shared context and spark classroom discussion.
- Sharing a rough lesson plan with me at least 72 hours in advance of your facilitation.
- Facilitating an engaged conversation.
- Asking your peers for specific feedback that would help you in your leadership development. Some examples could be: facilitation style, preparation, etc.

When you are a participant you are responsible for:

- Supporting your peers by being prepared and participatory.
- Offering constructive feedback to your peers.

Assignment #3: Online Questions or Reflections

Each week, in advance of seminar, you should post a short question or reflection on the upcoming conversation. This could include questions you have for a speaker, reflections on an assigned article, an idea you're thinking about, etc. This can be short - 3-5 sentences max. It should be posted by 5 pm on Tuesdays so that your peers have time to see your questions and thoughts. You can also use this space to respond to one another and start a conversation about online, however responding to one another is not a requirement.

Assignment #4: Personal Growth Plan

During the first few weeks of the semester, you will develop a personal growth plan that is largely focused on your professional goals. Through guided reflections, consultation with your peers and with me, you will identify your core strengths and your core areas for growth. Over the course of the year, you will have opportunities to return to this document and seek input from others.

Assignment #5: Attendance and class participation

I expect you to arrive to class on time, prepared and ready to engage with your peers. Participation is a large part of this seminar, and thus I expect you to participate in a multitude of ways. I do not grade on participation and attendance. However, if you miss more than two classes and/or seem generally disengaged in class, I will reach out to you to have a conversation about the impact on your learning and on the community. Here is the School of Social Work's [Policy on Class Attendance](#), which you can also find in the MSW Student Guide.

Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to

review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*

Class Schedule

Readings are not listed here, but will be available on Canvas at least two weeks in advance of seminar. You should check Canvas for those readings

September 1st: Welcome, Introduction, & Framing
In Person

September 8th: Rosh Hashanah, No Class
Alternate Activity: Personal & Professional Development Goals

September 15th: Yom Kippur, No Class.
Alternate Activity: Creating a Communal Space

Sept 22nd: Setting the Stage, Mapping the Jewish Communal Landscape
In Person

Sept 29th: Sukkot Open House
Student Led Discussion #1
In Person

October 6th: Privilege, Power & Oppression: Positioning Jews in American Frameworks

In Person

Student led Discussion #2

October 13th: Spiritual Care, Speakers TBD

Location TBD, likely In Person

October 20th - Jews & Climate Justice

Meet with Dahlia Rockowitz, director of [Dayenu: A Jewish Call To Climate Action](#)

Zoom

October 27th: Open Topic

Student led discussion #3

November 3rd: Jewish Communal Life Outside the Cities (5:15/5:20 to 630ish)

Zoom

Meet with Melanie Weiss of the [Center for Small Town Jewish Life](#)

November 10th: Jewish Philanthropy & Fundraising

Location TBD

[Kari Alterman](#), Davidson Foundation and [Sarai Brachman Shoup](#), Philanthropic Advisor

November 17th - JCLP Alumni Session

Location TBD

November 24th: Thanksgiving, no Class

December 1st: Chanukah celebration, Open Topic

In Person

Student led discussion #4

December 8th: Community Reflection, Personal and Professional Development

In Person