



Models and Methods for Serving Interfaith Families
Interfaith Families Jewish Engagement

CG-EDUC-642

Prof. Keren R. McGinity

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Scheduled by appointment. I am delighted to meet with you in person, by phone, or via Skype. Please feel welcome to contact me to schedule a mutually convenient time.

Course Description:

This course provides a practical framework for understanding programs and strategies designed to engage interfaith families in Jewish learning and community. It discusses existing models and methodologies through the examination of organizations and prepares students to become sensitized practitioners of engagement. Students will learn about specific organizations as well as develop the skills necessary for providing services in the field. Group and individual work will focus on developing innovative programming and engagement techniques, Jewish identity building, and egalitarian Jewish parenting.

Learning Objectives:

- Become familiar with the social and cultural landscape of organizations, programs and practitioners in North America who work in Jewish interfaith engagement;
- Explore major themes, challenges, and opportunities in the field of Jewish interfaith community building;
- Develop critical analysis skills about models and methods for serving interfaith families;
- Engage in reflective practice to heighten awareness of how our personal narratives, life experiences, and biases shape our approach to Jewish life;
- Gain insight into intersectional identities and how they dovetail with interfaith issues;
- Devise pioneering ideas that build upon or enrich existing organizational efforts;
- Build a community of colleagues beyond the IFJE program with whom to brainstorm and collaborate.

Class Times and Course Structure

Each new week of coursework opens on Wednesdays by midnight, which is when the preceding session will also close. There is no class session the week of Passover (April 10-17). The course is organized by organization or group of organizations to encourage the thoughtful consideration of each. Due to the fact that organizational allies are continuing to send materials, sessions will be viewed on their scheduled dates and once everything has been received. To accommodate students who like the ability to “read ahead,” organizations’ websites are included below, however please be aware that certain materials are only available via Schoology and have been carefully curated for the purpose of this course.

This is a practical course that is intended to inspire students to gain hands-on knowledge of and experience with organizational allies in the field of Jewish interfaith family engagement. As such it is focused on contemporary programs, evaluations, and new initiatives.

Most of the work will be engaged with asynchronously at students’ own pace during the corresponding week(s). We will also meet synchronously via Zoom four times during the semester. These meetings are optional but highly recommended if your schedule allows you to participate. ☺

Synchronous Sessions: Building Online Community

Please block off your calendars now so that you can participate. At our first synchronous session, we will get to know one another, review the syllabus, and confirm course expectations together. The second and third sessions will be devoted to wrestling with practical challenges and opportunities. At our last session, we will share highlights from our final projects. As always, questions are welcomed and encouraged.

Synchronous Sessions:

Wednesday, February 6 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Monday, March 11 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Wednesday, April 17 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Monday, May 13 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Assessment:

Students will be evaluated based on four types of coursework:

1. **Continuous Evidence of Engagement (30%):** The primary form of weekly participation is online postings in response to question prompts. Weekly participation should illustrate reflections on *specific* course materials and enrich the group’s discussions. Each student should contribute at least one *original* post to the discussions during the assignment week and before the start of the next

2. **Two Written Assignments (30%):** Students will write two short pieces (maximum 5 pages each, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) that are intended to: integrate course materials and class discussions. These papers will demonstrate your growing knowledge, skill and awareness.
Papers are due on: February 25th and April 10th.
3. **Field Interview and Analysis (20%):** Students will identify and reach out to leading practitioners and influencers in the field. This is an opportunity to broaden your own collegial network, and interview thought leaders about the evolution of their thinking, their work, and how they envision Jewish communal futures. Each student must create an interview guide consisting of seven questions, take notes during the interview, and submit a written description and analysis of key ideas, impressions, and insights after the interview. Please tie your analysis to at least two sources in course materials, and explain how your interviewee's perspective either illustrates or contradicts a particular model of engagement. **Interview guide and analysis due April 24th.**
4. **Final presentation (20%):** Students will invent a new ritual, one-off or ongoing program, or proposed organizational framework that responds to and reflects the needs of your local interfaith/mixed-heritage community. This creative project offers the opportunity to reflect on and share with the class how your thinking about Jewish engagement could be integrated into your current and future practice as a Jewish communal professional. You can write a paper and/or use multimedia. You must provide a rationale, description of the population you hope to engage, intended objectives and outcomes, the 'show-flow' of the ritual/program, staffing, venue, and budget. Be specific about what success would look like, and how would you measure/document it.
Final presentation due on May 17th.

Accommodations for Disabilities:

If you require course accommodations because of a documented disability or an emergency medical condition, please email the instructor at the beginning of the course or as soon as you become aware of the issue. Hebrew College will work with you to ensure that you can participate fully and complete course requirements. Please do not wait until the assignments are due for a retroactive accommodation, rather discuss the situation before you experience difficulty. For further information, see: http://hebrewcollege.edu/sites/default/files/student_handbook.pdf

Required Course Materials on Schoology:

A carefully curated compendium was created for this semester and future professional reference. It is full of information about the organizations in the field doing engagement work, their approaches, strategies, literature, and evaluations (when available). Materials are categorized according to three units: interfaith, integrative, and emergent. These groupings are not hard-and-fast, so there is some overlap between models. **Students should analyze everything contained in each folder on Schoology according to the dates outlined in the course schedule.**

Guiding Questions for All Course Materials:

1. What are the defining characteristics of each model: interfaith, integrative, and emergent?
2. How do geography and demography play roles in organizational frameworks and programming?
3. What methods appear to be more successful than others and what influences success?
4. Why do some organizations use the term “interfaith” and others do not?
5. How does one’s personal narrative influence professional outreach choices?
6. What is your view of post-denominational Judaism and interfaith Jewish engagement?
7. Why should engagement practitioners learn about organizations other than their own?

Recommended Course Materials (available from Amazon): *Intermarriage: Concepts and Strategies for Families and Synagogue Leaders* (NY: Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs, 2012). ISBN 978-1-4327-9848-2.

Making a Successful Jewish Interfaith Marriage: The Jewish Outreach Guide to Opportunities, Challenges and Resources by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing 2003). ISBN 1-58023-170-5.

The Guide to Jewish Interfaith Family Life: An InterfaithFamily.com Handbook edited by Ronnie Friedland and Edmund Case (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing 2001). ISBN 1-58023-153-5.

Course Topics and Schedule

UNIT 1: INTERFAITH MODEL

SESSION 1 (Feb. 6): Introductions, syllabus review, course expectations.

SESSION 2 (Feb. 13): The Jewish Outreach Institute and Big Tent Judaism

SESSION 3 (Feb. 20): Interfaith Family

SESSION 4 (Feb. 27): Love and Religion; JHUB

Note: First paper due.

UNIT 1: INTERFAITH MODEL (con't.)

SESSION 5 (March 6): URJ Reform Jewish Outreach Boston and Temple Rodef Shalom

SESSION 6 (March 13): FJMC Keruv; Adas Israel; Jewish Discovery Institute

SESSION 7 (March 20): Honeymoon Israel and Interfaith Community

UNIT 2: INTEGRATIVE MODEL

SESSION 8 (March 27): Secular Humanistic Judaism and Judaism Your Way

SESSION 9 (April 3): Keshet and LGBTQI

Suggestion: Reach out to a practitioner in the field and set up an interview now to avoid scrambling to finish the assignment due on April 24th (see below).

SESSION 10 (April 10): Sha'ar Communities and JewBelong

Note: Second paper due.

SESSION 11(April 17): Jewish Multiracial Network and Be'chol Lashon

Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), Introduction, pp. 1-7.

Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*: ch.8 "World War II and the Transformation of Jewish Racial Identity," pp.189-208.

Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, Epilogue "Jews, Whiteness and 'Tribalism,' in Multicultural America," pp. 209-239.

UNIT 3: EMERGENT MODEL

SESSION 12 (April 24): IKAR and Kavana

Note: Field Interview and Analysis Due.

SESSION 13 (May 1): Kitchen and LabShul

SESSION 14 (May 8): Mishkan Chicago, Romemu, Sixth & I

SESSION 15 (May 15):

Note: Final project due.

Edited KRM 1/14/19