

Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education
CG-EDUC-626 Spiritual Development in Jewish Education
Rabbi Dr. Michael J. Shire
Spring 2019

Contact Information:

Skype: Michael.shire
Email: mshire@hebrewcollege.edu
Phone: 617-559-8617

Course Scheduling:

This course is being offered in two formats: online and on-campus this semester.

On-campus format: Classes will be held on Wednesdays 4.00-5.30pm. On campus students need not participate in the discussion boards but all readings and assignments will be accessible through Schoology. If an on campus student has to miss a class, it can be made up by participating fully in the online class of the relevant week.

Online format: Each week of online coursework will begin on Thursday morning. I have found that this is the best time of the week to roll over to a new learning unit. It gives you time for reading over Shabbat and then posting and any group work or application to the classroom from Sunday onwards. You should have completed the week's work and posted in the discussion boards by Wednesday of each week. Some units however will last two weeks with work to be done within that period. Online students are invited to the on campus class if and when they are in Newton.

There will be two live sessions on:

Wednesday 27th February at 6pm EST

Wednesday 17th April at 6pm EST

You will be receiving an email invitation via ZOOM to participate in the live session.

These are optional but will orient you to the midterm and final assignments. They will be conducted on Zoom which is recordable and a recording of the live session will be posted into Schoology.

Office Hours:

I will be available on Monday afternoons EST for consultation, advice, discussion, etc., in person or via telecommunication. Please make an appointment by emailing me so that I can make time available for you. My phone number and email are above.

Differentiated Learning:

Hebrew College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in programs. Accordingly, if a student has a documented disability, and as a result, needs a reasonable

accommodation to attend, participate or complete course requirements, then he or she should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. For further information, see the Student Handbook at http://hebrewcollege.edu/sites/default/files/student_handbook.pdf.

If you require course accommodations because of a documented disability or an emergency medical condition, please email your instructor as soon as possible. We are happy to work with you on any issues you have to ensure that you can participate fully in the class and complete the course requirements. Please do not wait until the assignments are due for a retroactive accommodation, but discuss the situation with your instructor before you experience difficulty.

Essential Course Aims:

Jewish education has been primarily concerned with the transmission of knowledge, acquisition of skills and developing Jewish identity in people. However, many people wonder if any of this 'sticks' as a child grows up in a multi-cultural, multi-faith world. One aspect of cultivating religious identity has been missing from Jewish educational practice and that is nurturing the spiritual growth of the individual as an explicit aim of our educational practice. We seem to shy away from this practice in our schools and synagogues, often thinking that spiritual practice and a person's being with God are not part of the Judaism we know. However, not only is nurturing spiritual practice part of the essence of Judaism, it has also been a long component of Jewish education but largely ignored in our times. This course seeks to explore the cultivation of the spiritual life of the individual drawing upon the research, particularly but not exclusively of children's spirituality. I will offer a Jewish lens with which to view this spirituality that comes from our traditional sources and from contemporary thinking including Social and Emotional Learning, Mindfulness and Thriving. We will explore innovative and creative practices for Jewish education in our educational settings for children, adolescents and adults. Deepening our understanding of this field will determine the very way we see the overall and expanded purpose of a Jewish Education.

Learning Outcomes:

1. To locate Jewish education within an expanded set of purposes and goals including the cultivation of spiritual development
2. To critically understand and apply developmental theories of growth to religious education
3. To research the spirituality of children in the context of Jewish education
4. To generate teaching strategies for the nurture of the spiritual in Jewish education
5. To develop strategies for the teaching of Torah to enhance spiritual development
6. To develop modes of curriculum for the enhancement of spiritual practice in Jewish educational settings

Required Reading:

The majority of readings for the course will be available on Schoology for both on campus and online students. There will be required readings or alternative study each week posted on schoology.

These publications are **essential** reading and students may want to purchase them for future reference:

- Blumberg, S. and Goodman, R.L. (1990) Teaching about God and Spirituality, ARE, Denver
- Nye, R. (2009) Children's Spirituality; What It Is and Why It Matters. Church House Publishing, London
- Kessler, R. (2000) The Soul of Education. ASCD, Virginia

These publications are **desirable** readings that will amplify the teaching in the course and will be of interest to all those pursuing teaching in religious education settings. We will be reading extracts from these publications which will be available in Schoology:

- Ben David, A. (2016) *Becoming a Soulful Educator*, Jewish Lights, Vermont
- Benson, P. (2008) *Sparks: How parents can help ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Fowler, J, et al ,ed. (1991) *Stages of Faith and Religious Development*, SCM Press, London.
- Gollnick, J. (2005) *Religion and Spirituality in the life cycle*, Peter Lang, New York.
- Hay, D. with Nye, R. (1998) *The Spirit of the Child*, Fount, London.
- Miller, Lisa (2015) *The Spiritual Child*, St.Martin's Press, New York.
- The Piaseczna Rebbe: *Hovot Hatalmidim*

These publications are **not required** but can be used for further research particularly for those wishing to undergo a capstone project or research thesis later on:

- Alexander, H. (2001) *Reclaiming Goodness: Education and the Spiritual Quest*, University of Notre Dame, Indiana.
- Barry, C, M. et al ed. (2014) *Emerging Adults' Religiousness and Spirituality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Coles, R. (1990) *the Spiritual Life of Children*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.
- Grimmitt, M. (1987) *Religious Education and Human Development*, McCrimmons, Essex.
- Jacobs, L. (1968) *Faith*^[SM1], Basic Books, New York.
- Parks, Sharon D. (2011) *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in their search for meaning, purpose and faith*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Palmer, P. (1993) *To Know as we are known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*, Harper, San Francisco

Overall Course Structure: (see Schoology folders for schedule, readings, exercises and assignments)

UNIT 1: The Purposes of Jewish Education

Focusing on the expanded aims and goals for Jewish Education and the growing call for incorporating spirituality in Jewish Education. Recent deliberation on "Educating for Shlemut" will be examined.

UNIT 2: Spiritual Development: Theory to applied Practice

How the work of research in Spiritual Development has impacted spiritual pedagogies and understanding students engaged in Jewish Education.

GUEST INSTRUCTOR: Marcy Goldberg, Director of Education, Temple Beth Am, Woodland Hills, California. Marcy is a trained MUSSAR educator and has implemented character development (middot) into her school

UNIT 3: Child as Spiritual Learner

We will explore the research into the Spiritual Life of Children and the opportunities afforded to the religious educator to perceive their spiritual signatures and offer spiritual enhancement.

GUEST INSTRUCTOR: Rabbi Rebecca Milder, Director of the Jewish Enrichment Center, Chicago. Rebecca will model a protocol for reviewing children's creative work and expression.

UNIT 4: Teaching Strategies and Curriculum Development

Reviewing methodologies of intentional teaching strategies for spiritual enhancement including tefila, Torah stories, expressive arts, etc.

UNIT 4: Theology of Childhood

Biblical and Rabbinic sources for understanding Jewish attitudes to children and childhood towards a deeper understanding of the purposes of religious education.

Assessment:

Assessment for this course is designed to assist the instructor gauge the depth of learning, level of contribution and ability for creative and imaginative play in theological education. Assessment is also designed to enable students to gauge their own ability to learn and therefore some assignments will be self graded.

Assignments will include:

- Midterm assessment: Child Study Faith Interview and report (20% of course grade)
 - This requires constructing an appropriate protocol, implementing a faith interview with a child and a report on their spiritual signature. Further details are in the midterm assignment folder in Schoology
 - **Hand In Date: 20th March 2019**
- Final assessment: Exploring an intentional Spiritual Pedagogy and its impact (40% of course grade)
 - The final assessment asks you to choose a spiritual pedagogy and implement it in a class setting. You will be asked also to determine an assessment tool to understand the impact of the pedagogy on the spiritual enhancement of the students. Further details in the final assignment folder in Schoology.
 - **Hand in Date: For graduates: May 22nd 2019**
 - **For non graduates: May 27th 2019**

Also assessed will be your

- Reflection on practice in the set exercises
- Small Group work participation
- Participation on discussion boards and quality of contributions to discussions
- Creative and imaginative capacity to play
- Depth of understanding of the readings

This set of assessments will reflect 40% of the course grade