

**Theory & Practice of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish Education**  
**CG-EDUC-834**  
**Orah Levin-Minder**  
**Spring 2019**

**Contact Information:**

Email: [orah.minder@gmail.com](mailto:orah.minder@gmail.com)

**Office Hours:** TBD

**Course Scheduling:** Fridays 9-11

**Course Description:** This course explores the theories of 21st century Jewish education and ways that these theories inform practice. We will examine different tools for learning and teaching across educational venues. Utilizing some foundational theories, including Schwab's Commonplaces and How People Learn, students will strengthen their skills in analyzing and constructing educational landscapes that reference the learner, the teacher, content, assessments, and community. The course will culminate in learners becoming visionaries by redesigning their own landscape for Jewish education in the 21st century and taking the first concrete steps toward making this vision a reality.

**Essential Questions** (to be explored throughout the semester):

- As Jewish educators, what is your role in shaping the landscape of Jewish education in the 21st century?
- How are changes in the field's understanding of learning processes and how systems function impacting the ways in which we construct learning environments?
- How is educational theory translated into practice? How does/can this translation process inform the construction of educational landscapes?

**Expected Learning Outcomes:** As we explore the above stated essential questions throughout the course, learners will develop the following core competencies and abilities:

- Relate theory to practice in their own and other's educational settings
- Better understand the nature of teaching and learning and the application to Jewish educational settings
- Apply general education theories to the Jewish setting
- Explore the major Jewish educational theories as a means to refine a personal vision of Jewish education
- Broaden their reading in educational theory and practice, both general and Jewish
- Demonstrate reflective thinking about practice in Jewish Education
- Be able to reflect on personal learning style
- Develop a professional and entrepreneurial persona for working in Jewish education

**Required Texts and Resources:** course readings will be electronically uploaded to our

schoology course site.

**Activities:**

- **Readings** for each class session will be uploaded to our schoology account. Readings will introduce theoretical concepts and provide examples of how these concepts can be used in educational environments. Students will be given various opportunities to critically engage with these concepts.
- **In-Class Activities** will scaffold learning, as well as to provide opportunities for students to collaboratively synthesize and process readings. Students will be given opportunities to demonstrate understanding of core ideas and link theory to practice. Students will also be invited to participate in reflection about their own educations and teaching practice.
- **Discussion Boards** will provide students another opportunity to process readings and demonstrate critical engagement with readings.

**Assessments:**

- **Active Participation (50% of grade):**
  - Students will participate in the in-class discussions by working collaboratively to synthesize readings and critically consider the relationship between theory and personal teaching practice.
  - Students will also participate in online “reading journals” that provide another environment in which to work through readings and critically engage with theory and personal practice. Students will be asked to respond to course readings by the Wednesday morning before class. The instructor will usually post a prompt question that is meant to shape the response, but postings may also include a free response to the weekly readings. These discussion board postings are meant to give students another opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the readings; practice applying the theory in the readings to their own practice; and to engage in critical response to the readings.
- **Performance Tasks (50% of grade):** There will be three written “performance tasks” due on the following dates:
  - Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm
  - Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup> by 11:59pm
  - Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm
  - Each of these assignments will be weighted equally towards this portion of the final grade.

**A note about attendance:** If you know- in advance- that you will need to miss a class session, please contact the instructor. **INCLUDE THE HANDBOOK RULE ABOUT ATTENDANCE.** Please note that much of your “active participation” grade depends on your participation *in class*.

**Note about late work:** Please note that assignments turned in late will automatically be marked down by a full grade. If you know, in advance, that you will need an extension on a particular assignment, please contact the instructor.

**Course Accommodations for Disabilities:** 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](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. I am 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.

### **Course Structure**

## **UNIT 1: PARTICIPATING IN THE LANDSCAPE OF JEWISH EDUCATION**

### **2/8- Session 1- Creating a Learning Community**

During our first class period together, we will get to know each other and begin to create our learning community guidelines. In addition, we will review the expectations of this class, discuss the scope and sequence of the course, start framing our learning goals, and introduce the concept of constructivist theory in education (our first expected learning outcome for the semester).

#### **Reading:**

- Bryfman, David (2016). *When You Are Happy and You Know It: The True Purpose of Jewish Education*. [ejewishphilanthropy.com](http://ejewishphilanthropy.com).

### **2/15- Session 2- The Evolving Landscape of Jewish Education**

**Enduring Understanding:** Jewish education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is undergoing dramatic transformations; at this pivotal time educators have a unique opportunity to help shape the emerging landscape of Jewish education.

#### **Framing Questions:**

- What is the landscape of Jewish education in 2019? How does it compare to the landscape of Jewish education when you were a child?
- What does it mean to look at the educational setting as a landscape? In what ways is an educational landscape connected to and impacted by its surrounding environment?
- What is your role in building the Jewish educational landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

#### **Reading:**

- Wertheimer, J. (2008) "The Current Moment in Jewish Education, An Historians View" in *What We Now Know about Jewish Education*. Torah Aura Prod., 13-20
- Wertheimer, J. (2018). "Jack Wertheimer on the New American Judaism," Princeton University Press, September 18, 2018., 1-2.
- Wertheimer, J. (2018). "Engaging Millennials is All the Rage. But is it the Best Use of Philanthropy," Times of Israel Blog, 11/22/2018, 1-6.

### 2/22- Session 3- Schwab's Theory of "Commonplaces"

**Enduring Understanding:** The process of learning is highly dynamic and involves multiple elements that interact with one another. The framework of Schwab's commonplaces is one lens that can help teachers understand and analyze the complex dynamic of education.

#### **Framing Questions:**

- As a teacher, what tends to be the commonplace/s you feel most comfortable addressing? Which are the ones you find to be the most challenging?
- What does it mean to seek coordination among the commonplaces when teaching? What practices can support the achievement of coordination among the commonplaces?
- As a learner, how do you personally interact with each of Schwab's commonplaces? What is the type of learning environment in which you most thrive? In which are you most challenged?

#### **Reading:**

- Schwab, J.J. (1973). The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum. *The School Review*, 81(4), 501-522
- Cohen, B. I. (1993). An Application of Schwab's Educational Commonplaces: Examining One Aspect of the Milieu Commonplace as Reflected in a Synagogue in a Florida Retirement Community. *Shofar*, 11(3).

### 3/8- Session 4- Theories of Identity in Jewish Education

**Enduring Understanding:** The language of "Jewish identity" has populated and shaped the literature of Jewish education for decades. The ways "Jewish identity" has been conceptualized has changed from scholar to scholar, and from decade to decade. Reflecting upon our own use of the phrase can help us determine how the concept shapes our practice as Jewish educators.

#### **Framing Questions:**

- What are some of the different ways scholars have conceptualized "Jewish identity"?
- How do we define and conceptualize "Jewish identity"?
- How do our perceptions of "Jewish identity" shape our practice?

#### **Reading:**

- Stuart Charmé and Tali Zerkowicz, "Jewish Identities: Educating for Multiple and Moving Targets," *International Handbook of Jewish Education*
- Kelman, Ari, "The End of Identity?." *Contemporary Jewry*, 32(2).

## UNIT 2: CONSTRUCTING THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING LANDSCAPE- HOW PEOPLE LEARN

### 3/15- Session 5- Introduction to How People Learn

**Enduring Understanding:** By better understanding the process of learning, educators can design more effective and impactful learning experiences for students.

**Framing Questions:**

- How do the following principles influence how educators interact with learners:
  - Engaging learners' prior understandings
  - The essential role of core knowledge and conceptual frameworks in understanding
  - The importance of self-monitoring
- How can the framework introduced by the research of *How People Learn* help provide a lens through which you can analyze your work as an educator?

**Reading:**

- Committee on How People Learn, A Targeted Report for Teachers, Center for Studies on Behavior and Development, National Research Council. "Front Matter." *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2005.

### 3/22- Session 6- Constructivism: Empowering the Learner

**Enduring Understanding:** By empowering learners, educators can deepen student engagement, foster meaning-making, and nurture the capacity for life-long learning among their students.

**Framing Questions:**

- What is the theoretical basis for constructivism as presented in Dewey?
- In what ways does empowering the learner impact the dynamics of the learning environment? How does it impact each of the commonplaces within the educational landscape?
- How do your values as an educator influence your stance regarding the empowerment of learners?
- How might the value of empowering the learner be enacted in a Jewish setting?

**Readings:**

- Dewey, J., & Small, A. W. (1897). *My Pedagogic Creed*. E.L. Kellogg & Company.

### 3/29- Session 7 – Curriculum: A Theoretical Perspective

**Enduring Understanding:** Educational theory can assist the teacher in identifying the core content and conceptual frameworks that will ground Jewish education and lead to the Jewish growth and enrichment of learners.

- **Framing Questions:**
  - What are some key theories of curriculum development? What processes do they espouse?
  - What does each of the theories have to say about how to prioritize content knowledge and develop curriculum in a Jewish educational environment?
  - Based on these theories, what are some ways of introducing Jewish content knowledge to learners in a way that leads to deeper understanding and meaning?
  - How does content knowledge fit into broader goals and the overall landscape you are aiming to construct when teaching?

**Reading:**

- The Tyler Model of Curriculum Development (downloaded from Educational Research Topics blog November, 2018)
- Understanding by Design Framework (downloaded from ASCD website November, 2018)
- Excerpts from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

4/12- Session 8- Teacher as Learner

**Enduring Understanding:**

**Framing Questions:**

**Reading:**

- Sharon Feiman-Nemser
- Lee Shulaman & PCK???

4/19- Session 9- Exploring Community: The Relationship of the Jewish Educational Setting and its Environment

**Enduring Understanding:** Connecting with community and engaging in a process of socialization is a key component of Jewish education and plays out in a variety of ways in diverse Jewish educational settings.

**Framing Questions:**

- How is community defined within the landscape of Jewish education?
- What is the role of the community within the landscape of Jewish education?
- How community and curriculum connected?
- What types of communities are contained within the overall landscape of Jewish education? How do each of these communities function within the larger framework of Jewish education?

**Reading:**

- Lave & Wenger here????

4/26-Session 10- Introduction to Visions Unit

**Enduring Understanding:**

**Framing Questions:**

**Reading:**

5/3- Session 11- Pekarsky????

**Enduring Understanding:**

**Framing Questions:**

**Reading:**

5/10- Session 12-

**Enduring Understanding:**

**Framing Questions:**

**Reading:**

5/17- Session 13- FINAL SESSION WRAP UPS

**Enduring Understanding:**

**Framing Questions:**

**Reading:**