

Theory and Practice of Experiential Jewish Education Course Outline Hebrew College

David Bryfman, Ph.d

EDUC 567: Theory and Practice of Experiential Jewish Education (3 credits)

Week of September, 20 2010 – Week of December 20, 2011

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Course Description

Experiential Jewish education is quickly becoming one of the most innovative and important areas of Jewish education, with the capacity to impact and inspire a wide range of learners in a multitude of different educational settings. Today more than ever, the Jewish educator needs to be fluent in the language of experiential education to be able to create a lasting, vibrant and enriching encounter between the student and Jewish tradition. This online course will examine the theoretical underpinnings and practical manifestations within the emerging field of experiential Jewish education. The course will offer students multiple opportunities to immerse themselves in varied Jewish educational settings, interact with their fellow students and reflect on their own practices. Student assessment will encourage a diversity of assignments which will reflect the multiple ways our students both learn and teach.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course students will have the opportunity:

- To become familiar with the philosophy and theory of experiential education.
- To understand the theory and philosophies behind experiential Jewish education and particularly how it has evolved in the last few decades.
- To become knowledgeable about the various settings in which experiential Jewish education takes place.
- To be able to identify the core characteristics of experiential Jewish education and experiential Jewish educators.
- To be able to relate the theoretical underpinnings of this course into a wide variety of Jewish educational settings.
- To articulate personal beliefs about experiential Jewish education and the role that it plays in the Jewish community, within specific institutions, and within one's own practice.

Course Methodology

Each week, students will be expected to:

1. Listen and view the week's online lecture (s) and related audio/audio visual files. In some weeks there will also be a recorded interview with an "expert" in the specific topic being covered. (There will be between 50-90 minutes of recordings that students will be required to listen and view each week).
2. Complete all assigned readings, which should take 1-2 hours a week. (Most readings will be available throughout the course, but students should check every Monday morning in case additional readings have been posted)

During the weeks of September 20 (Sukkot), September 27 (Sukkot, Sh'mini Atzeret, Simchat Torah) and November 22 (Thanksgiving) there will be higher reading assignments but lighter workloads)

3. Students are encouraged to look at additional readings each week. Some of these will be particularly useful for specific assignments that students choose to undertake.
4. Participate regularly in the Discussion Board, in the Voice Board and in the Group Pages – as outlined in each week's assignments.
5. Complete and submit all assignments by the due dates.

Participation/Discussion Board

Ongoing participation in our course is a primary requirement of all course members. Participation expectations include:

- One post a week to a Discussion Board question and a revisit to the Discussion Board at the end of a weekly unit to read responses left for you.
- One response a week to at least one fellow student on a Discussion Board question

At the launch of each weekly unit you will find information about the number of discussion board questions, group page, or voice board work expected for that week.

Required Text(s)/Software/Tools:

1. Students will be required to read **four** full books during the course of the semester. The rest of the course material will be articles, websites and audiofiles that where possible will be made accessible online for students to access.

The **two** core books are:

Dewey, J. (1938/1998). *Experience and Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1st ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

One of:

Fried, R. (2001) *The Passionate Teacher: A Practical Guide*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Palmer, P. (2007) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Edmundson, M. (2003). *Teacher: The One Who Made the Difference*, New York: Vintage.

Kidder, T. (1990). *Among Schoolchildren*, New York :Harper Perennial.

And one of:

Sales, A. L., & Saxe, L. (2004). *How Goodly Are Thy Tents: Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*. Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press in association with The Avi Chai Foundation, published by University Press of New England.

Kelner, S. (2010). *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*, New York: NYU Press.

Lorge, M., M., & Zola, G., P. (Eds.). (2006). *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press.

Saxe, L. and Chazan, B., (2008). *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity*, NY: Brandeis University Press.

Shapiro, F., (2006). *Building Jewish Roots: The Israel Experience*, McGill-Queen's University Press.

(Students can also suggest their own 3rd book that must relate directly to one of the topics discussed in Weeks 5-7, which must be approved by instructor)

2. This course contains audio material and in some instances, you may be asked to participate in audio-based activities, such as a Voice Discussion Board. A headset (headphones plus microphone) will allow you to hear and record audio. The Logitech ClearChat Comfort USB Headset, or the Plantronics Audio 470 or 500, or comparable brands/models, are recommended.

3. One assignment will require students to record (and post) an interview that they conduct. Students can choose whether this will be an audio or video interview, and must ensure that they have access to a device that can create a file that can be uploaded to the server as a.mp3, .avi, .mp4, or .mov file.

Assignments and Assessment

There will be 5 components to the grading associated with this course:

1. Assignment #1: Interview an Experiential Jewish Educator (20%)

Due: Posted Friday 4pmEST on Week prior to related to Specific Topic

(e.g. Summer Camp to be posted on October 18, Youth Movement October 25 etc.)

Students are required to interview a Jewish educational professional related to one of the topics covered in Week 5-11 of this course. Interviews should be no longer than 20 minutes. Students will need to record their interviews (audio or preferably video) and post them to the relevant discussion forum prior to the week that the specific topic is being discussed.

2. Assignment #2: An Exercise in Praxis (20%)

Due: November 1st, 2010

Based on one of the books that students choose to read they are required to relate the theoretical underpinnings of the particular setting to an experience that they are familiar with.

3. Final Project: Research Assignment (25%)

Due: January 3rd, 2011

Students will need to design their own research question in consultation with the instructor. The research question must demonstrate an exploration of a particular topic covered in the course.

4. Contribution to online discussions, forums, and weekly exercises (25%)

Ongoing participation in our online course is a primary requirement of all course members. Participation expectations include:

5. Reflective Piece (10%)

Due: January 7, 2011

At the conclusion of the course students will be required to reflect on their experience in the course.

Communication/Submission of Work

At the launch of each weekly unit, please visit the Assignments folder, click on the View/Complete Assignment link to view each assignment. Attach your completed assignments here and click Submit to turn them in to me. Once your assignment has been graded, you will be able to view the grade and feedback I have provided by clicking on Tools, View Grades from the Northeastern University Online Campus tab.

New York based students

For students who are recipients of the generous grant from UJA Federation New York, there will be required 2 gatherings that will be coordinated by Nike Silberstein (silbersteinn@bjeny.org) during the semester.

Boston based students

We will try to coordinate one face-to-face session with Boston based students during the course of the semester.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Finding Flow in Experiential Education

September 20, 2011

Unit 2: Experience and Education

Week of September 27, 2011

Unit 3: Formal, Informal and Nonformal Jewish Education

Week of October 4, 2011

Unit 4: From Informal to Experiential Jewish Education

Week of October 11, 2011

Unit 5: Jewish Summer Camping

Week of October 18, 2011

Unit 6: Jewish Youth Movements and Youth Groups

Week of October 25, 2011

Unit 7: Early Jewish Engagement (Early Childhood and their Families)

Week of November 1, 2011

Unit Eight: Israel Education and the Israel Experience

Week of November 8, 2011

Unit 9: Jewish Service Learning

Week of November 15, 2011

Unit 10: Emerging Jewish Adulthood

Week of November 22, 2011

Unit 11: Adult Jewish Education

Week of November 29, 2011

Unit 12: The Experiential Jewish Educator

Week of December 6, 2011

Unit 13: Jewish Education and Technology

Week of December 13, 2011

Unit 14: Looking into the Future of Experiential Jewish Education

Week of December 20, 2011