Course Description:
What are the critical elements of education in general and Jewish education in particular, in the contemporary era? What are the basic components of a well designed class? This course will explore key elements of backwards design of unit and lesson planning, including establishing goals, set induction, formulating essential questions, discovery learning, moving classes toward closure, homework, assessment. Elements of the flipped classroom will be introduced to help focus learning, and significant emphasis will be placed on practice grounded in educational theory.

Learning Objectives:
- Students will become familiar with the language of education.
- Students will understand the theory of what makes for a well-constructed, engaging, age-appropriate lesson.
- Students will learn to design, deliver, and assess a well-constructed lesson in the context of an educational unit pursuing essential questions and enduring understandings.

Required Texts:
Bailey, S. Can Spirituality Be Taught? *Jewish Educational Leadership* 5:2
Lorch, S. The New Academic Rigor. *Jewish Educational Leadership* 7:3
Mendelsohn-Aviv, D. You Have 600,000 Friends. *Jewish Educational Leadership* 7:2
Postman, N. and Weingartner, C., *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (Delta, 1969), pp. 51-57
Smilowitz, Mark. Active Learning in the Halakhah Class. *Jewish Educational Leadership* 7:3
Solomon, R. D. and Davidson, N., Cooperative Learning: Research and Implementation for Jewish Education. *Jewish Educational Leadership* 7:3

Optional Texts:
Feiman-Nemser, S. What We Know About Learning to Teach. In Kelman, S. (ed.) *What We Know About Jewish Education* (Torah Aura, 1992), pp. 51-57
Assessment:

Course requirements:
- Students will attend and actively participate in class.
- Students will complete all assignments, including readings, research, lesson plans, written weekly assignments and oral presentations.
- Students complete a summative project including the design of a unit, teaching of that unit, revision of the unit, and reflections on the process.

Grades will be assigned based on the following:
- Portfolio of regular assignments/presentations – 35%
- Attendance and participation in class – 30%
- Final project – 35%

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. 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.

Course Structure (Dates, Topics, Readings and Assignments):
1. September 11 2013. Who is in the classroom?
2. October 2, 2013. Jewish education in the contemporary era – challenges and opportunities
   **Readings:** Greenberg, Mendelson-Aviv, Malamet
   **Assignment:** One of these articles presents post-modernity as a tremendous challenge to educators, while another sees it as an extraordinary opportunity:
   1. Based on your experience, how would you define the contemporary era?
   2. What challenges do you envision yourself, as an educator, facing from post modernity?
   3. What are the challenges of creating meaningful identity in a digital age?
3. October 9, 2013. Meaning-making I – identifying assumptions and setting goals
   **Readings:** Wiggins and McTighe, Intro, and Chapter 1
   **Assignment 1:** The argument for backwards design often uses models from outside of education – business, manufacturing, engineering, etc. The point being that you need to know what the end product will look like before you begin. Offer a compelling argument why those models cannot – and should not – be applied to education. What are the dangers of using a manufacturing model in education? What are the dangers of not adopting effective methods used in other spheres of human interaction?
   **Assignment 2:** Prepare a 5-7 minute video which will cover your adaptation for the classroom of something you learned recently in one of your Pardes classes. Make sure to identify your target population.
   **Readings:** Wiggins and McTighe, Chap. 3, Chap. 5, [www.galileo.org/tips/essential_questions.html](http://www.galileo.org/tips/essential_questions.html)
   **Assignment:** View your video from last week. Can you identify within it essential questions? If not, imagine what essential questions you would focus on given the opportunity to teach it a second time.
**Readings:** Postman & Weingartner Chap. 4, Heilman

**Assignment 1:** Respond to one of the following two questions

1. Postman and Weingartner focus on the question of relevance. Should we be lowering our expectations to where the students are or aiming to lift them up so that they appreciate the classics, whether Shakespeare or Jeremiah? What do we sacrifice in our quest for relevance, and is it worth it?
2. How would you respond to the situation described by Heilman regarding the class in איכה?

**Assignment 2:** Re-record your video from last week to include a set induction as well as a focus on an essential question.

6. October 30, 2013. Maximizing student engagement II – active and discovery learning

**Readings:** Smilowitz, Postman and Weingartner Chapter 2-3, Lorch

**Assignment:** View your video. Design one activity (7-15 minutes) for students to do in class which will support, reinforce, deepen, or expand their learning on your video lesson.


**Assignment:** Prepare a 12-minute lesson on a topic of your choice to present to the class. The lesson should include the elements we have learned so far (essential question, set induction, learning activity).


**Assignment:** Return to the video and activity which you prepared. Formulate three questions which, if answered correctly, would let you know that the students had mastered the content of the lesson. Now formulate a) what you would consider to be an ideal answer from a student and, b) what you would consider a minimally acceptable response from a student.


**Assignment:** Prepare a lesson based on a Hebrew text from the Haggadah. This lesson must include all the elements we have examined so far (essential question, set induction, learning activity, assessment) and must include a textual skill component.


**Assignment:** Go back to your lesson on the Haggadah and prepare three different learning activities, each geared toward a different level of student, revolving around the same text. Please make sure that your written instructions are clear, that what you present to the students (in print or online) leaves adequate room and is visually welcoming.


**Assignment:** Assume that your class on the Haggadah meets only twice a week. Design either a preparatory activity for the students to do at home prior to the class or a review activity that the students will do at home after the class. Please make sure that the activities include a knowledge component as well as one which will spark their interest. You may choose to use online media for this homework assignment.


**Reading** www2.okbu.edu/academics/natsci/ed/398/set.htm

**Assignment:** Prepare two alternate closures for the Haggadah class. Why did you choose these? What are the advantages/disadvantages of each as they relate to your lesson?


**Assignment 1:** Look at the two classes you prepared so far (the video class and the one for the Haggadah). Write an outline of the lesson identifying the learning component and its goal. If those goals do not complement or support each other organically, modify them so that they do.

**Assignment 2:** Still looking at the outlines, write the words you would use to transition from one component to the next.


**Assignment:** Go back to one of the two lesson plans you prepared. Adjust it so that it would developmentally appropriate for a class which is either three grades higher or three grades lower than the one for which you initially planned.
15. January 29, 2014. Clarity, reframing and rephrasing

16. February 5, 2014. Leading discussions

17. February 12, 2014. Classroom management

18. February 19, 2014. Writing lesson plans
Assignment: There are many different formats for lesson plans. Every board of education, state, school district, private school, principal and department head has a different format for lesson plans — and none are inherently better than any others. The lesson plan is the guide for the teacher, and reflects what the teacher considers important.

With teachers constantly being pressured to teach more and take on additional responsibilities, with less time for preparation, there is a proliferation of sharing of lesson plans. A Google search for lesson plans will reveal many millions of hits — it can be overwhelming. It is worthwhile doing a Google search to see for yourself what comes up or catches your eye.

For this assignment please look at three lesson plans, two from Jewish sites and one from a general studies site. Here are three popular links for very different kinds of lesson plan resources.
http://www.lookstein.org/lesson_plans.php
http://www.chinuch.org/

Evaluate those lesson plans based on the criteria we have learned for created lesson:
a. Is the goal of the lesson clear? Can you figure out why that goal is important?
b. Does the class open with some sort of motivating activity? Does the lesson provide for a variety of learning activities and/or ongoing motivation?
c. Does the lesson use essential questions to further drive the inquiry? d-
d. Are there a variety of learning modes utilized in the lesson?
e. Does the lesson have coherence and alignment? Does it close appropriately?

Please make sure you include either the link to the specific lesson you are evaluating or the full text of the lesson.

19. April 30, 2014. Student-teaching reflections
Readings: Brown; Palmer, Chapter 1

Assignment: The art of teaching involves creating a deep encounter between the teacher, with his or her whole self, and the student. The Hebrew for word influence, ה השפע , has at its root the word השע , meaning overflowing abundance. That is, the teacher cannot really impact on his or her students unless the teacher’s selfhood overflows into the classroom.

On the other hand, teachers need to avoid having themselves and their lives playing a significant role in the classroom. It’s not about the teacher, it’s about the student. The distance between the teacher and student is critical for a healthy relationship.

a. In light of this tension, please react to this week’s readings.
b. How does one draw the line between “good” sharing of oneself and “bad” sharing of oneself in the process of education?
c. Is it effective, honest or ethical for a teacher to “play a role” without truly subscribing to the values or ideology being taught?
d. Where does the “self” of the teacher come into the teaching?

Final Assignment:
Prepare a lesson (or small unit) for your student teaching including all the elements we learned in this course and teach it. After the lesson, please reflect on it — what did you like about the lesson, what would you change, why do you think that certain parts of the lesson of lesson “worked” while others did not, and how do you know that certain parts of the lesson were more effective than others. Make sure to include feedback from your mentor and your own observations. Based on your reflections, revise the lesson.