Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education
CG-EDUC-675: Teaching Tefillah
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Summer 2014-2015: June 16 - August 15, 2014

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Course Description: This course explores theories of Tefillah, how theories inform practice and how educators can integrate and apply their pedagogical-content knowledge when teaching Tefillah. Students will deepen their appreciation for the transformational potential of Jewish prayer, gain language to listen to students, and explore their own attitude and experience with Tefillah.

The course will have a dual focus: content knowledge and pedagogic application. In studying each topic, students will be asked to consider both the concepts and sources of the topic, as well as how the topic can be taught and experienced by learners in various educational settings. The course will culminate in learners applying their learning about Tefillah to design a Tefillah learning experience for the context and age group of their choosing.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore the questions of: What does prayer mean to me? Why do people pray?
- Clarify personal experiences and relationships to prayer, and how that impacts on teaching
- Apply theories of children’s spiritual development to teaching prayer
- Understand the prayer framework of keva/kavanah: structure and personal spontaneity in prayer, and how it applies to teaching prayer.
- Explore personal theologies and their impact on our relationship to Jewish prayer.

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

- As Jewish educators, how do you talk about prayer with your students?
- How do you engage in meaningful prayer, in your own practice, and as a Jewish educator?
- How is Tefillah theory translated into practice?
- What are pedagogies of prayer?
- How can Jewish educators integrate and apply pedagogical-content-knowledge when teaching Tefillah?
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 others’ educational settings
- Understand the nature of teaching and learning about Jewish prayer and application to Jewish educational settings
- Explore the major Jewish educational theories about prayer as a means to refine a personal vision of Jewish Education
- Examine and develop the role of prayer for Jewish education
- Broaden their reading in prayer theory, practice, and Tefillah curricula
- Demonstrate reflective thinking about Tefillah in Jewish Education
- Understand the nature of religious growth and spiritual practice for Jewish Education and the cultivation of the imagination and creativity
- Demonstrate independent learning
- Demonstrate reflective thinking about practice in Jewish Education
- Become a reflective practitioner about learning and how to learn
- Hone the ability to communicate Judaic content in an educational setting

Required Texts:
You are required to acquire two texts that will serve as reference materials throughout the course:

- A siddur of your choice

Weekly readings for the course will be available via downloadable PDF files posted on Schoology.

Optional Texts:

Links for optional additional readings:

- Prayertech: [http://tapbb.wordpress.com/2014/03/25/introducing-prayertech/](http://tapbb.wordpress.com/2014/03/25/introducing-prayertech/)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btkmEQZTEWM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btkmEQZTEWM)
- With All Our Hearts ... A Wiki on Jewish Prayer [http://withallourhearts.wikispaces.com/.HOME](http://withallourhearts.wikispaces.com/.HOME)
- The Open Siddur Project - [http://opensiddur.net/](http://opensiddur.net/)
- HAMA’ALOT - AN EXPERIMENT: (Temple Beth Am, Los Angeles) [http://www.tbala.org/page.cfm?p=2473](http://www.tbala.org/page.cfm?p=2473)
- JEDLAB discussion on tefillot: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/jdsmedialab/permalink/252459248286513/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/jdsmedialab/permalink/252459248286513/)

Activities: On a weekly basis there will be two main components of our learning together:
• Readings: required readings for each week are listed below
• Schoology discussion board: The heart of the course will be the weekly online discussion boards. Each student is required to post a meaningful response to the ‘Guiding Questions’ by Tuesday evening. We will then have until Friday to respond to each other’s ideas, ask probing questions, and generally push each other to go deeper into that week’s material and concepts. Each student is required to respond to at least three classmates’ posts, as well as to reply to responses to his or her initial post.

Assessment:
• Discussion Posts: This is the primary form of weekly participation. This is a measure of effort and ongoing active participation in the class discussions, asking pertinent questions about readings, sharing reflections, contributing new ideas to the class dialogue, and overall contribution to the learning process beyond the parameters of weekly assigned learning activities. (40% of grade)
• Performance Tasks: There will be three performance tasks over the course of the semester, corresponding to the three elements of the Instructional Core Triangle. (30% of grade - 10% each)
  ○ Teacher: Personal reflection. Write a description of a tefillah experience (defined widely) that was particularly meaningful to you in some way. After describing the experience, explain why it was meaningful. Your entire life is your text—you may choose from any part of it - childhood, last week, etc. The experience need not be a positive one, as a negative experience may be equally meaningful or formative. If you choose to write on a negative experience, reflect on your “complaint” and consider what it may teach you about what you WOULD value in a prayer experience. Due: June 26/14.
  ○ Content: Analyze and assess a tefillah curriculum of your choosing. What do you notice? What theories about spirituality are evident? What assumptions did the curriculum designers make about what makes effective teaching of tefillah? How does the methodology align with the articulated goals of the curriculum? Due July 11/14.
    ▪ Ask the student some of these questions:
      • What do they think about during prayer?
      • What do they like about prayer in a group: in school, camp, a congregation or elsewhere?
      • When have they had meaningful spiritual experiences?
      • not a family member!

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.

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):

Week 1 - June 16’14 Introduction: Tefillot and the Instructional Core triangle: prayer, pray-er & educator
  ● Why Pray?
  ● Reasons for not praying
  ● Prayer as self-discipline (p. 8)
  ● Prayer as self-analysis and ethical consciousness raising (p. 13)
  ● Prayer as a link between individuals and community (p. 18 - 20)
  ● Linkage to tradition through community (p. 22)
  ● Prayer as a response to the wonder of being alive (p. 23)
  ● Prayer as Torah study (p. 26)

Week 2 - June 23’14 Teacher: tefillah
- “Soulful Education - Why imparting knowledge is not enough” Aryeh Ben David (e-book .PDF)

Week 3 - June 30’14 Content: Keva and Kavannah
  ● “Part II: The Jewish Worship Service,” pp. 27 - 86

Week 4 - July 7’14 Content: Shevah(Praise) / Bakas ha(Petition) / Hoda’ah (Thanks)
  ● The B’rachah - building block of worship (p. 83 - 90)

Week 5 - July 14’14 Content: how is tefillah being taught in the field?
- Ravsak Hayidion, Spring 2013. “Tefillah” [link]

Week 6 - July 21’14 Student: Spiritual Lives of Children
Week 7 - July 28’14  Student: Questions about God
  ● Language of faith: God talk (p. 61 - 66)
  ● “Seeking Spirituality,” pp. 125 - 127

Week 8 - August 4’14  Integrating the Instructional Core Triangle
  ● Questions for analyzing prayers (p. 139)

Week 9 - August 11’14  Tying it all together
http://www.lookstein.org/resources/tefilla_listing.htm

Final Assignment: (30% of grade)
Design a meaningful prayer learning experience, for a particular age level and context (ie: day school, supplementary school, camp, or other). The unit plan must include:

- A very specific goal that is appropriate to the intended audience, articulated in the form of Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions.
- At least three complete lesson plans.
- An assessment that addresses the learning objectives of the unit.
- A description of the pedagogical reasoning for the choices that were made about what to teach and how to teach it. The description should explain how the curriculum was designed, integrating the three elements of Instructional Core triangle.