

# ***Organizational Behavior in Jewish Nonprofits (HRNS 237b)***

***Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program ▪ Brandeis University ▪ Spring 2012***

## ***INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION***

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## ***COURSE OVERVIEW***

The work of the Jewish community in the United States is carried out through more than 10,000 different nonprofit Jewish organizations, each of which began with a vision and a mission. This course has been designed to provide you with insights into how Jewish nonprofit organizations operate, and will help you to acquire the knowledge and skills that you will need to function effectively as a professional in a Jewish nonprofit.

However, it is important to recognize from the outset that most of the topics covered in this course are not unique to Jewish organizations. The various processes that operate in Jewish organizations also operate in other nonprofits, as well as in business organizations. Consequently, in order to be successful in a Jewish nonprofit, one must develop an appreciation of the fundamental issues that arise when working in any organization. These include (but are by no means limited to) establishing a vision, working with a board, guiding change, motivating employees, inspiring volunteers, maximizing team effectiveness, navigating organizational politics, and managing conflict when it arises. These processes are not inherently Jewish, although they may be strongly informed and shaped by Jewish values.

Accordingly, a majority of our time will be spent exploring relevant material from two fields of study, nonprofit management and organizational behavior. To place the material in a Jewish context, readings and examples from a variety of Jewish sources will be used throughout the course to illustrate and elaborate upon the general principles that we will investigate.

## ***COURSE GOALS***

- to provide you with a conceptual understanding of the elements of nonprofit management and the principles of organizational behavior
- to help you acquire an appreciation of how Jewish nonprofit organizations are simultaneously similar to and different from other types of organizations
- to elucidate how knowledge of organizational behavior and principles of nonprofit management can improve Jewish organizations
- to acquaint you with Jewish teachings relevant to organizational life
- to help you develop practical management skills

## **DEVELOPING PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

Paula Caproni, a former director of the Executive Skills Program at the University of Michigan Business School, who is the author of one of the texts for this course, describes five essential skills for effectiveness in any organization:

- developing the habit of lifelong learning and critical thinking
- developing greater self-awareness regarding your strengths and areas for growth
- creating a broad and diverse network of high-quality relationships
- creating an environment that brings out the best in others
- crafting a meaningful personal and professional life

Class activities, readings, and assignments have been designed to help you appreciate and cultivate these skills.

## **TEXTS AND READINGS**

This course is ambitious in scope, requiring a considerable amount of reading. As noted earlier, our selections will draw from the management literature, the nonprofit literature, and Jewish sources.

Required texts are listed below. Reading not in the texts will be available on LATTE, Brandeis University's online learning software, as PDF documents.

Bookman, T., & Kahn, W. A. (2007). *This house we build: Lessons for healthy synagogues and the people who dwell there*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.

Caproni, P. (2005). *Management skills for everyday life: The practical coach*, second edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Note: Although there is a new, third edition of this text, we will be using the second edition since it is not appreciably different and is considerably less expensive. You can buy it used on Amazon.com or Half.com for as little as \$4.00, or you can borrow or buy a copy from the second-year class. It is not available in the campus bookstore.

Carlson, M., & Donohoe, M. (2010). *The executive director's guide to thriving as a nonprofit leader*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Colquitt, J., Lepine, J. & Wesson, M. (2009). *Organizational behavior: Essentials for improving performance and commitment*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Note: This text may also be borrowed or bought from the second-year class. A copy will be placed on reserve at the library.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Your final grade will be based on the total number of points you earn divided by the total number of points it is possible to earn (500). Points are earned by completing the following assignments:

- *D'var Torah* – You will be giving a brief D'var Torah to the class on a topic relevant to Jewish organizations (50 points; 10% of your final grade).
- *Interview* – You will be conducting an interview with the president of the board of a Jewish nonprofit and will describe what you learned from the interview in a paper (100 points; 20%).
- *Exploration Papers* – Each week, at the end of class, you will receive guidelines for an exploration paper that will require you to probe more deeply into the week's topic. You have the option of doing the assignment or declining. If you choose to write the paper, you will have several weeks to complete the assignment. In total, you will need to complete three exploration papers by the end of the course (2 papers x 100 points; 40%).
- *Organizational Analysis* – The final assignment will be done in pairs. You will study a Jewish organization in Boston or elsewhere, write a case analysis, and give a presentation to the class (150 points; 30%).

Guidelines for the D'var Torah will be distributed and explained during the first class and are also available on LATTE. Guidelines for the interview, exploration papers, and the case analysis will be distributed well in advance of the due date. There will be no tests. Class participation will be not be graded formally, but will be taken into account if you are on the border between two grades.

## **WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Reading assignments for a given week's class should be completed prior to the class meeting. Reading assignments that are not in the course texts are designated below with an asterisk and can be found on LATTE. On occasion, readings may be added or subtracted from the list below – you will be notified well in advance. Full citations for all reading assignments can be found at the end of this syllabus.

### **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

- Week 1**  
**1/19**      **The Complex Nature of Jewish Nonprofits**  
*Introduction to the course*  
Rosen, The Remaking of Hillel\*
- Week 2**  
**1/26**      **The Nonprofit Sector and the Jewish Sector**  
*What are the characteristics and features of nonprofit organizations in the United States? What is the structure of the Jewish nonprofit sector?*  
Worth, pages 17-43\*  
Burstein, Jewish Nonprofit Organizations in the U.S.\*  
Chanes, A Primer on the American Jewish Community\*  
Windmueller, The Survival and Success of Jewish Institutions\*
- Week 3**  
**2/2**      **Governance**  
*What are the responsibilities of a nonprofit board of directors? What are the intersecting roles of board members and professionals in Jewish nonprofits?*  
Guest Speaker: Jonathan Kolker, Past President of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee  
Renz, Leadership, Governance, and the Work of the Board\*  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapters 11 and 12  
Bookman and Kahn, Chapter 14  
Rosen, pages xiii-xxii; 47-55\*
- Week 4**  
**2/9**      **Culture, Mission, and Vision**  
*What are the underlying values, principles, beliefs, practices, and assumptions that guide nonprofits? How do Jewish nonprofits define their mission and create a vision for the future?*  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapters 4 and 5  
Bookman and Kahn, Chapter 3  
Allison and Kaye, pages 85-123\*  
Hauser and House, Lead Through Vision and Values\*  
Bookman and Kahn, Chapter 1

**Week 5**  
**2/16**      **Capacity, Collaboration, and Change**  
*How do nonprofit organizations become more effective? How do they evolve over time? When is it appropriate for nonprofits to collaborate or merge? How should Jewish nonprofits manage change?*

Worth, pages 193-217\*  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapter 16  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapters 9 and 10  
Brown, pages 151-167\*  
Bookman and Kahn, Chapter 4

**2/23**      **NO CLASS: STARR SEMINAR/MIDTERM RECESS**

**PART 2: INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR AND JEWISH NONPROFIT EFFECTIVENESS**

**Week 6**  
**3/1**      **Knowing and Managing Yourself**  
*What recommendations do contemporary and Jewish writers offer for becoming a successful professional in a Jewish nonprofit?*

Caproni, Chapters 1-2  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapters 2 and 3  
Peterson and Seligman, pages 3-32\*  
Morinis, pages 3-27; 295-297\*

**Week 7**  
**3/7**      **Managing Employees and Volunteers**  
*How can Jewish nonprofits maximize employee performance and retain high-performing employees? What are the best ways to organize a volunteer program?*

**WED**  
**NIGHT**  
**CLASS**

Colquitt, Chapters 2-3, 5  
Carlson and Donohoe, Chapter 13  
Brudney, Designing and Managing Volunteer Programs\*  
Simon, pages 35-48\*

**Week 8**  
**3/8**      **Learning and Decision Making**  
*What are the most effective ways to acquire job related knowledge and skills and solve organizational problems?*

Colquitt, Chapter 7  
Gill, pages 53-74\*  
Tosi and Mero, pages 204-221\*  
Tierney, Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?\*

**3/15**      **NO CLASS**

**PART 3: WORKING TOGETHER IN JEWISH NONPROFITS**

- Week 9**      **Groups, Teams, Meetings, and Committees**  
**3/22**      *What are the essential principles for maximizing the effectiveness of groups?*  
                 Caproni, Chapter 8
- Week 10**    **Relationships**  
**3/28**      *Why is it so important to understand others, foster trust, and communicate effectively in*  
**WED**      *Jewish nonprofits?*  
**NIGHT**      Colquitt, Chapter 6  
**CLASS**      Caproni, Chapters 3-4
- Week 11**    **Influence, Power, Politics, and Conflict**  
**3/29**      *What are the most effective strategies for making sure one's ideas are heard and*  
*implemented in a Jewish nonprofit? What are the most effective tactics for working*  
*things out when political considerations dominate and conflict arises?*  
                 Colquitt, Chapter 10, pages 224-230 (stop at Conflict Resolution)  
                 Caproni, Chapter 5 (read chapter and complete Social Styles questionnaire on pages  
                 200-201)  
                 Bookman and Kahn, Chapter 17  
                 Whetten and Cameron, pages 380-408\*  
                 Brown, pages 117-137\*
- 4/5**      **NO CLASS**
- 4/12**      **NO CLASS – PASSOVER**
- Week 12**    **Topic to be Determined Based on Interests of Class**  
**4/19**
- Week 13**    **FINAL PRESENTATIONS**  
**4/26**

**FULL CITATIONS FOR READING ASSIGNMENTS**

- Allison, M. and Kaye, J. (2005). *Strategic planning for nonprofit organizations: A practical guide and workbook*, 2nd edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Bookman, T. and Kahn, W. (2007). *This house we build: Lessons for healthy synagogues and the people who dwell there*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.
- Brown, E. (2008). *Inspired Jewish leadership*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.
- Burstein, P. (2011). Jewish nonprofit organizations in the U.S.: A preliminary survey. *Contemporary Jewry*, 31: 129-148.
- Brudney, J.L. (2010). Designing and managing volunteer programs. In D.O. Renz (Ed.). *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (pages 753-793). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Caproni, P. (2005). *Management skills for everyday life: The practical coach*, 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Carlson, M. and Donohoe, M. (2010). *The executive director's guide to thriving as a nonprofit leader*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Chanes, J.A. (2008). *A primer on the American Jewish community*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: American Jewish Committee.
- Colquitt, J., Lepine, J. and Wesson, M. (2009). *Organizational behavior: Essentials for improving performance and commitment*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Gill, S. J. (2010). *Developing a learning culture in nonprofit organizations*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Hauser, M. and House, R.J. (2004). Lead through vision and values. In E.A. Locke (Ed.), *Handbook of the principles of organizational behavior* (pages 257–273). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Morinis, A. (2007). *Everyday holiness: The Jewish spiritual path of mussar* (pages 3-27; 295-297). Boston: Trumpeter.
- Peterson, C. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Renz, D. O. (2010). Leadership, governance, and the work of the board. In D.O. Renz (Ed.). *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (pages 125-156). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rosen, M.I. (2006). *The remaking of Hillel: A case study on leadership and organizational transformation*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership.
- Rosen, M.I. (2010). *Mission, meaning, and money: How the Joint Distribution Committee became a fundraising innovator*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership.
- Tierney, J. (2011, August 17). Do you suffer from decision fatigue? *New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.
- Tosi, H. L. and Mero, N. P. (2003). *The fundamentals of organizational behavior: What managers need to know*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Whetten, D.A. and Cameron, K.S. (2007). *Developing management skills*, 7th edition (pages 380 – 408). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Windmueller, S. (1999). The survival and success of Jewish institutions: Assessing organizational and management patterns. In G.B. Bubis, *The director had a heart attack and the president resigned: Board-staff relations for the 21st century* (pages 77-86). Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Worth, M.J. (2012). *Nonprofit management: Principles and practice*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.