P11.2197: Taub Seminar

Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
Program in Nonprofit Management and Judaic Studies
New York University

Spring, 2009
9:00-10:40 A.M
Room 261 Meyer

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-12:30 or by appointment

We enter any subject of investigation filled with learned viewpoints, opinions, and select facts that we choose to employ. This helps to make the task of uncovering what we mean by Jewish and Jewish community fraught with unusual difficulty. Whatever our background, it will be hard to shake preconceived positions. In addition, the Jewish community seeks to nurture purely voluntary association at a time of little support in the popular culture for sustaining communal norms, existing institutions or unenforceable obligations. Our study must also then be understood within the larger American context of voluntary associations.

The Taub seminar will wrestle with such issues as identity, communal organization, core and fringe, and the indices and litmus tests of institutionalized belonging. We will explore how power is defined, how leaders are selected and consensus determined. We will examine the wide range of communal institutions and organizations – philanthropic, educational, social, religious and social service – that place themselves within the orbit of the Jewish community to uncover how they define their missions, establish authority, make decisions, recruit involvement and gain (or lose) loyalty and affiliation. As important, we will test the capacities of these institutions and their leaders to address the many challenges they face in an environment of waning allegiance and obligation.

Where appropriate and in order to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom, key leaders in the field will visit the class. By preparing rigorously for these sessions, we will be ready for the tasks of critical examination and analysis that should challenge existing institutional assumptions. Gaining the tools and the eye to evaluate institutions and leadership in terms of mission, structure, capacity and delivery are at the core of the seminar’s commitment to determine what is meant by Jewish and Jewish community in the twenty-first century. The central goal of the Taub Seminar is to help you become more effective agents of communal and public service institutional transformation.
Course requirements include:

1. Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all seminar sessions. This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic before the session. You are asked to:
   - Question the significance of the topic and the analyses you read — is the methodology solid; does the analysis comport with the results?
   - Search for what biases (and there are always biases) affected the choice of subject, data and analysis?
   - Check yourself out: In what ways do the evidence and analyses conform to your own experience and assessments and in what ways do they challenge?
   - Consider what institutional and organizational implications can be drawn from the readings and what types of leadership responses would be most productive?
   - What can I learn as a leader and manager, policy analyst and community builder?
Class participation is crucial and the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement will be reflected in your final grade. If speaking in public is difficult for you, please come to see me early on.

2. Assume leadership in one seminar discussion (alone or as part of a team). I am ready to work with each student on how to structure the session. Look over the sessions and choose a few sessions that you would like to lead. We will determine who does what at the first session.

3. Students will choose the readings from three sessions that seem powerful, meaningful and/or problematic and write a one page analysis of the readings (it need not cover all the readings, but at least three). This analysis, while reflecting rigorous and careful reading, allows you to explore what excites you intellectually and/or how you imagine applying what you read to professional areas that interest you. These three one-pagers should be submitted on the day of the session in which we discuss the readings and no later than one week following the session. I would encourage you to not wait for the last three sessions to submit papers.

4. A research paper written alone or with one partner on what you consider to be a key issue that Jewish leaders will be facing within five years. This means locating the challenge that will be faced, posing the best questions on the subject you can develop, researching information that is presently available, and positing some possible paths that can be taken. Length should be determined by what it takes you to efficiently and clearly present your issue and provide pathways to address the questions that arise on the subject.

5. By the fifth session, **February 18, 2009**, you will hand in a short synopsis (no more than one page) of your subject plus the questions you will address which I will hand back the following week with any advice I can give. In addition, I would encourage you to meet with me to discuss the paper.

6. On **April 29, 2009**, each student will provide her/his classmates with a two page maximum summary of the issue you chose, the questions you posed and the ideas you have developed to address the issue. This is your opportunity to brief the class about your paper through this one page abstract.

7. For the final session, having read each and all of the one page summary abstracts, you will all engage in a communal conversation, explaining (and possibly defending) your issue, findings and conclusions. In this way, we will model how communities can
anticipate problems and place them on a communal agenda. Your final paper is due at that session on **May 6, 2009**.

8. Your grade will reflect your participation in seminar sessions, your thoughtful planning and facilitation of one seminar session, your three one-page analyses of the readings and your final paper. The combination thus reflects your analytic skills, your ability to cogently present and also participate in discussions, and your ability to link your study to anticipate future community building and nurturing issues.

**Blackboard:**

1. Much of the reading, many announcements, class related documents and other useful class information will be posted to the class Blackboard site at [http://classes.nyu.edu/](http://classes.nyu.edu/) so make sure to check that our regularly.
2. Also, check your NYU email regularly for any other announcements.
3. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view some of the materials. Make sure that you have it installed.

**Readings:**

1. The readings listed for each session provide a survey of what is available on the subject. I will star * the required readings we all will share and hope that you will look at the other readings since my goal is to provide debate and multiple perspectives.
2. If you can, it is worth purchasing *Religion as A Public Good*, edited by Alan Mittleman (Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD., 2003), the revised edition of *Community and Polity* by Dan Elazar (JPS, Philadelphia, 1995) and Gerald Bubis *The Director Had a Heart Attack and the President Resigned*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Israel, 1999. I gave you a link to Google Books for J.J. Goldberg *Jewish Power: Inside The American Jewish Establishment*,* Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1996 – but you may want to buy the book.
3. I will provide you with hard copies of the AJC materials, Jewish Networking by Herring and Shrage, and Slingshot by Bennet, et.al along with some class materials.
4. As much as possible will be available on Blackboard or on the Internet as noted. Otherwise, books will be placed on reserve in the library.

**Academic Integrity**

As a professional, you will need to use many resources that have been developed, authored and/or organized by others. Making great use of the work of others is a valuable professional tool – originality is not axiomatically a virtue. Honoring the hard work of those who prepared what you borrow and use is an issue of integrity. That lesson begins in your academic work. To refresh yourself on the rules of academic integrity, see [https://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/](https://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/)
SEMINAR SESSIONS:

1. **Training the Eye: How to be an office chair cultural anthropologist.**
   January 21, 2009

When confronting an issue within an organization in which you are involved, you have a personal response (what does this do or mean to me?). You also have a leadership and organizational response (what is best for the mission of the organization and the population I serve?). And then, you must have the capacity to stand back and assess, as a trained analyst, what is happening in and to your organization. This is also true in learning. Training the eye means that one recognizes a personal connection to what is being learned and how what is being studied applies to one’s role as a leader. It also demands that the student stand up on the balcony and try to observe as a dispassionate analyst.

- *Lieux de Memoire, Pierre Nora, General Introduction: Between Memory and History* (especially pages 7-9 and 14-16) 
  [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928520?seq=8&Search=yes&term=de&term=memoire&term=lieux&term=nora&term=pierre&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3Fquery%3Dpierre%2Bnora%2Blieux%2Bde%2Bmemoire%26pew%3Dpierre%2Bnora%2Blieux%2Bde%2Bmemoire%26Search%3DSearch%26ew%3D%26hp%3D%26pre%3D%26memoire%2Bde%2Bmemoire%26Search%3DSearch%26hp%3D%26%26%26%26Don%2B%26cookieSet%3D1&item=3&ttl=633&returnArticleService=showArticle&resultsServiceName=doBasicResultsFromArticle](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928520?seq=8&Search=yes&term=de&term=memoire&term=lieux&term=nora&term=pierre&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3Fquery%3Dpierre%2Bnora%2Blieux%2Bde%2Bmemoire%26pew%3Dpierre%2Bnora%2Blieux%2Bde%2Bmemoire%26Search%3DSearch%26ew%3D%26hp%3D%26%26%26%26Don%2B%2B&item=3&ttl=633&returnArticleService=showArticle&resultsServiceName=doBasicResultsFromArticle)
- Fiddler on the Roof- opening scene (supplied in class)
- Daniel J. Levitin, This Is Your Brain on Music, pg. 100 (supplied in class)

2. **Seeking Definitions: Who and what constitute the American Jewish community?**
   January 28, 2009

This is a seemingly simple question that has engaged demographers, religious and communal leaders, and social scientists in heated debates that are ideologically driven. Our goal will be to sort out and understand what is at stake in these arguments. Begin your preparation for this session by trying to determine what the author, demographer or social analyst you are reading understand Jewish to be. It may be explicit or you may need to evaluate based on who is included and who is
excluded. How would Jewish identity and community look different based on each position? What difference would it make?


3. How Jewish Fits In: Jewish communal identity and organizations in the historical and contemporary context of voluntary association in America. February 4, 2009

The Jewish community in the United States developed in a unique fashion, lacking rabbis and other professional leaders as well as any sense of a traditional European or Middle Eastern “Gemeinde” with its authority and obligation structure (think of Weber’s classic notion of Gemeinschaft). From its inception in the 17th century, voluntary association has been at the core of the U.S. Jewish life and exit was easy. We will examine what institutions historically have constituted the Jewish community
and in what ways they are products of Jewish and/or American communal structures. We will experiment with categorizing Jewish within the American context of ethnicity, religion, socio-economic position, personal faith, leisure time activity, and/or voluntary association. In so doing, we will look at various organizational structures to better understand what Jewish identity is assumed.

- *Bellah, et al., Habits of the Heart (2008 ed), chapter 2*

4. One Nation, Under God: American Jewish as a personal choice and as a religious community.
February 11, 2009

The Establishment Clause of the first amendment, firmly since the 1950’s, has separated Church and State – religion is a personal matter unrelated to citizenship and government. Others claim and recent court decisions seem to fortify rather that this amendment seeks to promote religion and only refrains from privileging any one particular religion. This debate is at the heart of Jewish participation in the American enterprise, especially in trying to discern the benefits and dangers of a religious America.

- *Alan Mittleman ed., Religion as a Public Good. (Chs. 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10)*
5. **Looking for Social Capital: Jewish as a network of compelling relationships**  
**February 18, 2009**

Being Jewish in America is often defined by a set of behaviors and identity claims. One could argue that a better definition would be one that derives from Jewish as a web of relationships and a network of associations that provide significant benefits of social capital, personal meaning and tribal affiliation well beyond the confines of Jewish institutions. Here our concern moves beyond the historical to make claims about the ways Jews connect to each other and the roles that social capital derived from participation in voluntary associations play in fostering allegiance. And we will want to touch on whether community is moving from a place in time to virtual associations no longer dependent on geography.


6. **Seeking a System: Bureaucratic paralysis, innovation and adaptation**  
**February 25, 2009**

Jonathan Sarna quips that we should all live to be 120 and, since almost all the major Jewish organizations and institutions were founded between 1880-1900, their time has come to die – or else find a new mission and organizational expression. In fact, change is occurring yet often not efficiently or in a functional fashion. This session will examine and evaluate Jewish institutional structures, what are their common issues and how change does and can take place. At the same time, Jewish institutions exist in a wider world buffeted by global shifts in communication and information flow, new approaches to community organizing and organizational management, and a demand for resources that affect Jewish communal effectiveness and competitiveness in American society.

- *Hayyim Herring and Barry Shrage, Jewish Networking: Linking People, Institutions, Community* (book provided)
- *Sylvia Barack Fishman, Transformations in the Composition of American Jewish Households*  
- “Emergent Jewish Communities and their Participants: Preliminary Findings from the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Study”, Berman Jewish Policy Archives, [http://hdl.handle.net/10207/10087](http://hdl.handle.net/10207/10087)

- *Gerald Bubis and Steven Windmueller, From Predictability to Chaos*, Center for Jewish Community Studies, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2000, pgs. 65-104
7. Inside or Out: Are Jews part of the American power elite or a vulnerable minority – Self-defense and the battle for rights
March 4, 2009

Much of the organizational structure of American Jewry reflects an historical preoccupation with self-defense and the dangers of anti-Semitism in the U.S. or abroad. The majority of Jews seem to see this as a valued mission while a vocal and growing minority attack what they claim is an unnecessary preoccupation with the Jewish defense business. An increasing percentage of Jews are not so interested in Jewish defense at all. In a society where race and immigrant status rather than religion often seems to be the dividing line, what role should self defense play as a Jewish concern in the U.S.? Digging deeper, what are the costs and benefits of communal resources being directed toward battling anti-Semitism?

• *Charles Silberman, A Certain People*, (Chs. 1-4), Summit Books, NY, 1985
• Steven Windmueller, “Defenders”: National Jewish Community Relations Councils”, in Alan Mittleman ed., Jewish Polity and American Civil Society, ch. 1
• ADL, Anti-Semitism in America, June, 2002
• *Gertrude Himelfarb, “American Jewry, Pre- and Post- 9/11”*, in Mittelman, Religion As a Public Good, ch. 6
• *Kenneth D. Wald, “The Probable Persistence of American Jewish Liberalism”*, in Mittelman, Religion as a Public Good, ch. 4
• AJC Honors Colombia Chief, A Bush Ally Tied to Abuses, Jennifer Siegel, Fri. May 04, 2007 (article provided): http://www.forward.com/articles/ajc-honors-colombia-chief-a-bush-ally-tied-to-abu/

8. Who Runs This Place?: The rising tensions of professional and volunteer leadership in Jewish communal settings
March 11, 2009

Seminar Guest Facilitator:
Shifra Broznick
Consultant specializing in organization change
Founding President, Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community
Among the most pressing internal structural issues facing Jewish leaders is the role divisions for lay volunteers and professionals in communal institutions. With a highly trained cadre of Jewish communal professionals and an equally sophisticated lay leadership, collisions are increasing. Increasing the talent pool of excellent communal professionals means respecting the profession itself as one would any other area of expertise. Asking high-powered and educated Jews to invest in voluntary leadership positions on lay-run boards and agencies means insuring them a meaningful and significant role to play. What are the core issues and what possible solutions can be found?

- *Gerald Bubis The Director Had a Heart Attack and the President Resigned*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Israel, 1999 (pgs 5-70 and choose additional chapters for further depth)

9. Who speaks for the Jewish community?: Power, authority and alternative voices
March 25, 2009

Over the past 150 years, there have been many attempts to establish an authoritative voice for U.S. Jewry, all of which have failed. The attempts continue. In addition, a plethora of survey research indicates that there often is a chasm separating what the average Jew stands for and what leaders of Jewish institutions claim is the Jewish view on an issue. In an age when authority is challenged by internet information and easily mobilizable grassroots movements, the attempt to present an authoritative Jewish voice which can be bartered in the American political system for influence and resources and the challenge to such attempts are bound to increase. Of course, there are also human desires for power and control that play out in organizational and inter-organizational conflict. Are there alternatives to a single-voice community and is a united voice even valuable for a 21st century Jewish community? What roles can and should Jewish professionals play when confronting issues of power and control?

- *Elazar, Community and Polity*, (revised edition), Chapter 11
- Deborah M. Kolb and Jill Kickul, “It Pays To Ask: Negotiating Conditions for Leadership Success,” CGO Insights, Center for Gender in Organizations (CGO), January 2006. Briefing Note Number 23
10. What Really is The Bottom Line: Philanthropy and Fundraising  
April 1, 2009

There are two elements to this session. One is to examine the highly effective mechanisms Jewish institutions and leaders employ to raise philanthropic dollars far disproportionate to the numbers of Jews in the U.S. and the ethical issues of fundraising that any NGO professional will face repeatedly in his or her career. The second is examine patterns of giving by Jews who are now fully integrated into American culture to better understand what motivates and constitutes Jewish giving.

Seminar Guest Facilitator:  
Ken Berger, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Charity Navigator

- *CLAL curriculum, “Covenantal Ethics and the Policies of Jewish Organizations,* 1998, selections will be provided  
11. Who Cares?: Israel, Jewish lobbying, Who is a Jew? and other thorny core issues  
April 8, 2009

The main competitor to anti-Semitism as a commanding shared issue for the organized Jewish community is defense of the State of Israel even as there are serious disagreements over Israeli and U.S. Middle East policies, whether on peace, the role of religion in government including who is defined as a Jew, the status of Palestinians or women in Israel, or the settlements beyond the green line. These issues overflow Israel’s borders and affect denominational relations, Jewish lobbying efforts, Hillel and Jewish community organizing and Jewish “public policy.” These issues also are highly volatile in the U.S. Jewish community, a subject that Jewish communal professionals navigating public policy questions linked to Israel often are asked to confront.

- *David Landau, Who is a Jew?* (AJC) (booklet distributed in class)
- *Religious Action Center on Religious Pluralism* (read each of the entries) http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issueisr/rp/
- *Martin J. Raffel, History of Israel Advocacy,* in Alan Mittleman ed., Jewish Polity and American Civil Society, ch.3
- An Evangelical Firebrand Hooks Up With Federations, Liberals Speak Out, Rebecca Spence, Fri. May 04, 2007—FORWARD
- Check out http://countrystudies.us/israel/ for further issues concerning Israel

April 22, 2009

**Seminar Guest Facilitator:**  
Bethamie Horowitz  
The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

The prevailing axiom is that an effective Jewish community should promote Jewish education (preferably day schools), Jewish camps and other Jewish summer experiences, Jewish youth groups and associations, and trips to Israel. Our question asks, “For what purpose and what, in fact, do we want these and other Jewish institutions to transmit?” The maintenance of a unique and separate Jewish identity in the United States challenges the experience of Caucasian immigrants even as Jews have an unparalleled role as equal citizens. What types of evidence and evaluation are
necessary to create compelling arguments on behalf of any institution’s or program’s effectiveness as a Jewish socializing agent and how clearly do we understand what successful socialization would look like?

- *Bruce Phillips, “Demography and Jewish Education”*

13. Living With Indeterminacy or “If You Don’t Know Where You Are Going, Many Paths May Get You There”: Exploring alternative Jewish futures
April 29, 2009 (One page synopsis due)

Seminar Guest Facilitator:
Roger Bennet
Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives
The Andrea & Charles Bronfman Philanthropies

The dilemma of social science analysis is whether one studies what is or what is becoming. We generally focus on the former for ease of research while the latter is moving and mutating and can be intellectually embarrassing since the results of change are seldom those predicted. Nonetheless, we will explore alternative ways to examine transformations in the community and among Jews and try to anticipate the leadership that will be necessary for such transformations.

• Greenberg “Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam...” Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choices, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Apr 10, 2006
• Cohen & Landres Emergent Jewish Communities
• Sharma Goldseeker, “Beyond Duty and Obligation”, Foundation News and Commentary, Jan/Feb 2006,
  http://www.jewishculture.org/content/pdf/CultureStudy.PDF,
  http://www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty/pubs/StevenCohen/CohenWertheimer.pdf
• Jonathan Woocher, Jewish Education in the Age of Google, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, No. 8, 15 May, 2006.

14. Student Presentations
   May 6, 2009
   Final Paper due