



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

PADM-GP 2197

Taub Seminar: Preparing to Serve and Lead the North American Jewish Community of the Future Spring 2021

Course Information

Professor Nina Bruder

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Office: Online

Phone: 917-371-7607

Office Hours: by appointment

Zoom link to classes:

Join URL: <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/92005457740>

Wednesdays 9:30-11:10 A.M

Zoom meeting: 920 0545 7740

The Taub seminar is designed to prepare future Jewish communal professionals to launch or continue their careers in the North American Jewish community. We will examine core issues and trends underpinning and challenging the North American Jewish community and build upon new learning to develop professional goals for service and leadership.

Sessions will wrestle with such issues as identity, self, and vision; characteristics of healthy organizations; communal sectors inwardly focused on the Jewish community; communal sectors interfacing outside of the Jewish community; and the broader societal context of all of our endeavors. We will explore the nature of volunteerism, obligation, communal boundaries, education, philanthropy, and communal discourse. We will explore how power is defined, how leaders are selected, and consensus determined (or not) both within Jewish organizations and across the community as a whole. As important, we will test the capacities of institutions and their leaders to address the many challenges they face in an environment of waning allegiance and obligation. This course will try to anticipate

the trajectory of the North American Jewish community ten years from now in order to enable you to develop your professional goals and chart your professional path into the future, ready to lead.

We enter any subject of investigation filled with personal experiences, viewpoints, opinions, and select facts that we choose to employ. Whatever our background, we will work hard to shake preconceived positions and be open to learning from multiple perspectives.

Where appropriate and in order to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom, key analysts and practitioners from the field will visit the class to share first-hand experiences and perspectives. Gaining the tools and the eye to evaluate communal 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 imagine the most effective and constructive responses to current challenges and future trends – in the hopes of identifying what is needed to become effective agents of communal and public service and change.

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:
 - Consider the types of challenges and issues presented in each session based on the topic provided, the readings and your own experience.
 - Question the significance of the topic and the analyses you read – are the issues significant, is the methodology solid; does the analysis comport with the results?
 - Search for what biases are affecting 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 possible solutions or responses are possible to address the questions posed?
 - 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 let me know early on.**

2. Students will choose at least two readings from three sessions that seem powerful, meaningful and/or problematic and will write a one-page, single-spaced analysis of the readings (your reflection need not cover all of the

readings from a specific session, but at least two). These analyses allow you to explore what excites you intellectually (positively or negatively) and/or how you imagine applying what you read to professional areas that interest you. You may add class session presentations and discussions as well as your outside experience to the reflection – but keep foremost the readings. These three reflections can be submitted at any time during the semester, but **no later than the following dates:**

1st Reflection **February 14, 2021**

2nd Reflection **April 9th,**

3rd Reflection **April 25th**

3. A research study developed with one or more partners on what you consider to be a key issue that Jews, Jewish leaders and/or organizations, or the Jewish community as a whole will be facing within five to ten years. This means identifying 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 to address this challenge. In doing this study, you will prepare: a research statement and synopsis, a written methodology plan (how you will get the information you need), a class media presentation that takes us through your research and then provides us with a proposed idea in response to the challenge. The proposed idea could be a new initiative and/or organization that will address the challenge for which you sought the research, a revamping of something already in existence to address the new challenge, or a scaling of something small that already addresses the challenge. Teams will present to each other on the last day of classes. Following the presentations, you will submit a final portfolio, in the form of a grant proposal, that includes your selected issue, your research, a draft logic model, your class presentation, and a short final statement of how your team imagines what your issue will look like in 2031. This is a creative opportunity to imagine the future – take seriously the task.
4. By the **fourth session (February 24)**, each student or team will have met with me to present and discuss your topic and research strategy. **Please make sure to schedule the meetings with me.**
5. **No later than March 3rd**, you will hand in a research statement and a short synopsis (no more than two pages, in outline form if you so choose) of your subject plus the questions you will address. I will be happy to work with you on focusing and refining the plan (if necessary) and hand back the following week with any further advice I can give. Please provide the team names.
6. There will be a take-home midterm. You will be given six questions from the sessions we had – that includes the readings, the session presentations and the discussions that took place. You will choose two questions and can write a maximum of four single-spaced pages combined. As this is a take-home exam, citations will be expected. **The Midterm will be posted on March 11th and will be due March 21st.**
7. **The week of March 29th**, each team will meet with me to review their research findings, discuss their methods of analysis and ideas for projecting solutions or responses to the challenge being analyzed. **Please make sure to schedule the meetings with me.** Note: no meetings on March 29 itself due to the Passover holiday.
8. On **April 28th**, you will provide your classmates with a one-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. **You will post these on the forum of NYU Classes.**

9. For the final session on **May 5th**, having read each 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. **PLEASE NOTE: IF POSSIBLE, THIS WILL BE AN EXTENDED SESSION FROM 9:30 AM -12:30 PM. to allow everyone to present. If not, we will need to meet during finals week.**
10. You will then hand in your final grant proposal/portfolio due **May 12th** which gives your team time to revise and finalize the research element you presented based on the responses you get during the class presentations. You may need to reframe or rewrite some of your work to fit the format of a grant proposal (template will be given to you). You will also be asked to submit a personal final reflection that encompasses the class experience, your project work, your team experience – all in the context of the readings and presentations. This reflection need not be longer than two single-spaced pages.
11. Your grade will reflect your participation in seminar sessions, your three one-page reflections on the readings, your midterm, your teamwork and final presentation, and your final personal reflection. 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 issues.
 - Each Reflection is worth up to 10 points (total maximum of 30)
 - The midterm is worth up to 25 points
 - The semester team research study, from the first research statement to the final presentation and portfolio is worth up to 30 points
 - Your final reflection is worth up to 10 points
 - Participation worth up to 5 points

NYU Classes and BJPA:

1. Many of the sources are found on the BJPA website.
2. Much of the reading, many announcements, class related documents and other useful class information will be posted to the class NYU Classes site at <http://classes.nyu.edu/> so make sure to check that our regularly.
3. Also, check your NYU email regularly for any other announcements.
4. 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. **DON'T PANIC OVER THE READINGS – THEY ARE RESOURCES FOR YOU TO CONSIDER, NOT THE**

BIBLE. They will help you be more conversant in and aware of the subject.

**IF FOR SOME UNFORTUNATE REASONS YOU MUST MISS A CLASS,
PLEASE LET ME KNOW.**

SEMINAR SESSIONS:

1. Session #1, February 3, 2021

Introductions

Training the Eye: How to be an office chair cultural anthropologist and an expert scenario planner.

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.

- *Elcott and Himmelfarb, Generations and Re-Generation: Engagement and Fidelity in 21st Century American Jewish Life before the course begins. You can find it [here](#)

The Session:

Step 1: Knowing who we are

Step 2: Explore Research Questions, Form Project Teams

2. Seeking Definitions: Who and what constitute the American Jewish community?

February 10, 2021

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 does it make?

- * [The Pew Study 2013](#)

- *Pew Research Center, April, 2015, [The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections](#), 2010-2015
- *Berman, L. C., Rosenblatt, K., & Stahl, R. Y. (2020). [Continuity Crisis: The History and Sexual Politics of an American Jewish Communal Project](#). American Jewish History, 104(2), 167-194. DellaPergoa, S. "Jewish Geography", American Jewish Committee, (2005)
- *Saxe, L. (2020). [Misogyny and the Continuity Crisis: Is Social Science Research Responsible?](#). American Jewish History, 104(2), 221-228.
- Saxe, L., Elizabeth Tighe, et al. "Reconsidering the Size and Characteristics of the American Jewish Population: New Estimates of a Larger and More Diverse Community", Steinhardt Social Research Institute, (2007) available on www.bjpa.org
- Tom Smith, "Jewish Distinctiveness in America", AJC, available on www.bjpa.org
- [Jewish Community Study of New York](#), 2011

1st Reflection DUE MIDNIGHT

February 14, 2021

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

February 17, 2021

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 authority and obligation structure. 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.

- *Jerome Chanes, A Primer on the American Jewish Community *(3rd edition, AJC) available on www.bjpa.org
- *Windmueller, The Emerging Jewish Civic Culture, E-Jewish Philanthropy, found in BJPA.org
- Robert D. Putnam, "[The Strange Disappearance of Civic America](#)", American Prospect, Volume 7, Issue 24, Dec 1, 1996,
- Theda Skocpol "Advocates Without members: The Recent Transformation of American Civic Life," in Skocpol and Fiorina Civic Engagement in American Democracy, Brookings, Washington, D.C., 1999, chapter 13
- Rokhi Kofrissen, 2014, [The Roots and Structure of the Identity Discourse in Contemporary Jewish Life](#)
- Chertok, et al, Cohen enter for Modern Jewish Studies, [Volunteering + Values: A Repair the World Report on Jewish Young Adults](#)

- Mittleman, Sarna, Licht, Jewish Polity and American Civil Society, Preface and Intro, ch.4,* Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2002
- Bellah, et al., Habits of the Heart (2008 ed), chapter 2*

4. Understanding the Range of Religious Practices and Communities February 24, 2021

Guest Speakers: Prof. Michael Berger, Emory Univ; Mrs. Suri Ganz, Jewish New Teacher Project; Rabbi Esther Lederman, Union for Reform Judaism; Prof. Jack Wertheimer, Jewish Theological Seminary

Being Jewish in America is often defined by a set of behaviors and identity claims. On the religious dimension, a multiplicity of “denominations” or “movements,” occupy different places on a continuum of religious belief and expression. Each movement has its own defining values, organizational infrastructure, structures of authority, gender dynamics, and patterns related to education and work. Some share history yet broke away from existing denominations, while others stem from entirely different immigrant groups coming to America during different periods in American Jewish history. This session will provide a look into four different religious denominations: Reform, Conservative, Modern Orthodox, and Haredi/Yeshivish. We will learn about what Jewish life looks like “on the ground” in each of these four distinct religious communities and identify challenges for the future.

- *Wertheimer, Jack. [“What Does Reform Judaism Stand For?”](#) Commentary, June, 2008, pp. 31-37.
- *Wertheimer, Jack. [“The Perplexities of Conservative Judaism.”](#) Commentary, Sept., 2007, pp 38-44.
- *Wertheimer, Jack. [“Can Modern Orthodoxy Survive?”](#) Mosaic, Aug, 2014.
- *Wertheimer, Jack. [“What You Don’t Know About the Ultra-Orthodox.”](#) Commentary, July/Aug, 2014, pp. 38-44.

BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH, EACH STUDENT OR TEAM WILL HAVE MET WITH ME TO PRESENT YOUR TOPIC AND STRATEGY FOR STUDY AND PRESENTATION

5. Bridging the Internal Divides

March 3, 2021

Guest Speaker: Dr. Yehuda Kurtzer, President and CEO, Shalom Hartman Institute North America

Is being Jewish a religion? An ethnicity? A tribe? A cookbook? With the wide range of divisions and polarization in society today, what holds Jews together – positive forces such as commitment and a sense of responsibility toward each other? Shared history? Or perhaps negative

forces such as anti-Semitism or the Holocaust? Where does Israel fit in and what are the synergies and tensions between American Jews and Israeli Jews? What is contained within the notion of peoplehood and beyond what point(s) are communal differences unbridgeable?

- *Kurtzer, Yehuda, "[The Biggest Threat to the Jews? The Partisan Divide.](#)" The Forward, Jan. 2, 2019.
- *Kurtzer, Yehuda, "[The Politics of Loyalty.](#)" The Jewish Week, May 27, 2015.
- *Kurtzer, Yehuda, "[The Deep Sources of a Great Divide.](#)" The New Republic, Sept. 6, 2018.
- *Kurtzer, Yehuda, Naomi Adland, Justus Baird, Gordon Tucker, [Courageous Leadership: The Challenges Facing Jewish Leadership in a Partisan Age.](#) Shalom Hartman Institute, Fall 2019.
- Noam Pianko, Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education, 2013, in BJPA [The Future of Peoplehood: From Nationhood to Neighborhood](#)
- [The Peoplehood Papers 29: A 21st Century Peoplehood with Tikkum Olan at Its Heart – What Does it Mean and How is it Done?](#). Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education, February, 2021.

RESEARCH STATEMENT AND RESOURCES DUE MARCH 3RD

6. Start-Ups and Legacy Organizations

March 10, 2021

Guest Speaker: Rabbi David Rosenn, President and CEO, Hebrew Free Loan Society

Since the year 2000, hundreds of new Jewish organizations have been launched across the country, some to much acclaim, and others to fizzle out after a short time. What are the characteristics of Jewish non-profit start-ups? What does the post-start-up stage look like? What is the relationship between the start-up sector and legacy organizations?

- *Bikkurim and Wellspring, [From First Fruits to Abundant Harvest: Maximizing the Potential of Innovative Jewish Start-Ups](#), 2012
- *Raucher, et al, The Jewish Innovation Economy, [The Jewish Innovation Economy: An Emerging Market for Knowledge and Social Capital](#), 2011.
- *Steven Windmueller, [Dollars on the Move](#), January, 2016
- Rosenn, David, "This is a Test," March 2021.
- Adene Sacks, "Funding Innovation: What Will it Take to Grow Impact?" Journal of Jewish Communal Service 86, Nos. ½, (Winter/Spring 2011), 162-169.
- [Pick one issue and look at its contents](#)
- Kelner, Shaul, "In Its Own Image: Independent Philanthropy and the Cultivation of Young Jewish Leadership," in The New Jewish Leaders: Reshaping the American Jewish Landscape, ed Jack Wertheimer, 2011, 261-321.

TAKE HOME MIDTERM ON LINE IN NYUCLASSES UNDER ASSIGNMENTS MARCH 11th - DUE BY 9:00 pm MARCH 24th.

7. Building Long-Term Strategic Relationships

March 17, 2021

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Bob Kaplan, Director, The Center for Community Leadership @JCRC-NY

The Jewish community in New York City has unique demographic patterns – half of the country’s Jewish population lives here. With New York City being one of the most diverse cities in the U.S., New York is also more “Jewy” feeling than any other city in the U.S., as exemplified by the number of articles about Jews in the New York Times every year. With Jews having such a visible presence, how are we perceived? How do we relate to other groups of people in the City? What tensions do we experience and what can be done to ease those tensions? Building coalitions with other minority groups is one strategy.

- Leadership and Dignity by Dr. Donna Hicks Weatherhead Center for Conflict Resolution at Harvard - Introduction
- The Center for Community Leadership at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York
- New York City Dept of City Planning on demographic changes in NYC
- “Navigating Intersectional Landscapes: Rules for Jewish Community Professionals.” Re’ut Group

8. Philanthropy #1: The Jewish Federation

March 24, 2021

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Deborah Joselow, Chief Planning Officer, UJA-Federation of NY

This session will kick off 2 conversations about Jewish philanthropy. Our starting place is the venerable UJA-Federation of New York, founded in 1917. The federation raises \$220M per year to serve and support local and global Jewish communities. It is one of the largest Jewish charities in the world and one of the top 100 charities in the entire U.S. (according to Forbes magazine). What are the highly effective mechanisms Jewish institutions and leaders employ to raise philanthropic dollars far disproportionate to the numbers of Jews in the U.S.? What are the different strategies UJA-Federation employs to raise funds from different segments of the community? What are the giving patterns of Jews who are fully integrated into American culture?

- [*UJA-Federation of NY Annual Report \(2020\) and Grants Book.](#)

- [*One pager on UJA's history](#)
- *Watch video: [Prof Lila Corwin Berman in Conversation with Prof Rob Reich, Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies](#), University of Pennsylvania.
- Amy Kass, *The Perfect Gift: The Philanthropic Imagination in Poetry and Prose*, (2002), excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 21-33.
- Wallace, N., "Where Are My Donors?" *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 5, 2018.
- Callahan, D. *The Givers – Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age*, pp. 16-33.
- Zinmeister, K., "How Philanthropy Fuels American Success," *Philanthropy Magazine*. Winter 2016, pp. 15-35.

9. Mid-Semester Check-In and Reflections

March 31, 2021

No Guest Speaker

This session will give us a breather from guest speakers and will give us a chance to think about and reflect on all of the topics we've addressed so far.

10. How to Speak to the Press

April 7, 2021

Guest Speaker: Gary Rosenblatt, Former Editor and Publisher, The Jewish Week

This session rises to the challenge presented to us earlier in the semester, that everyone leaving the Wagner School should be taught how to speak to the press. This class will provide insight into a reporter's approach to interviews, how the press shapes perception and opinions, and what you should think about before you begin a conversation with a reporter.

2nd REFLECTION DUE 9:00 pm, APRIL 9, 2021

11. Philanthropy #2: Foundations

April 14, 2021

Guest Speaker: Lisa Eisen, Co-President, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies

Foundations have had growing influence in the Jewish community over the past decades. This session will consider the role of foundations in pursuing a donor's vision, partnering with nonprofits on the ground, shaping the Jewish communal

agenda and policies. We will learn about the relationships between a foundation's staff and benefactor(s), as well as the foundation's staff and its grantees. This year, especially, foundations have played an important community role with COVID emergency support, acting swiftly and nimbly in response to emergency and emerging communal needs.

- *Wertheimer, Jack, [How Big Funders Have Transformed American Jewish Philanthropy](#). AVI CHAI Foundation, 2018.
- Fleishman, Joel, *The Foundation: A Great American Secret*, 2007

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the "Get Started" button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU's Wellness Exchange

[NYU's Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.