Applied Jewish Ethics (JS 318)

Professor: Dr. Jennifer A. Thompson, Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program

Course Day/Time: Completely online and asynchronous • Office Hours: Tues. 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

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Learning Opportunities

This course will provide you the following opportunities. There are 1000 points possible for the semester. All assignments are on Canvas.
Introductory modules: Learn the course's requirements, get to know your classmates, and ensure that you know basic information about Judaism.
Reading quizzes and questions: Engage with the readings on your own via questions that help you think about what you read.
Participation in salons (discussion forums): Collaborate with other students to learn about your own and others' perspectives.
Self-evaluations: Reflect on your performance in the course and plan your approach to future work.
Ethical Will: Demonstrate and reflect on your ability to apply the ethical theories and method discussed in this course to particular situations.

Evaluating your learning

Grade scale

A	93-100	•	A-	90-92			
B+	88-89	•	B	83-87	•	B-	80-82
C+	78-79	•	C	73-77	•	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	•	D	63-67	•	D-	60-62
F	59 and below						

A grade of C indicates that a student has met the learning objectives in a basic way. A grade of A indicates that a student has gone far beyond this level, demonstrating deep understanding of and independent thought about course topics in clear, polished writing.
Grade appeals will be considered only when: you wait at least 24 hours after you receive the grade, you explain in writing the reason for the appeal, pointing to specific evidence in the assignment that you turned in that supports your argument. This appeal must be submitted before the next assignment is due. If your appeal concerns the final assignment of the semester, it must be submitted before the end of finals week.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Man's Search for Meaning, by Viktor Frankl, available at the Matador Bookstore, online booksellers, and the Los Angeles Public Library. **Required**.

Applied Ethics eText and additional articles available online (see Canvas).

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

I. Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program

This course applies Jewish teachings to contemporary social problems. Case studies may involve wealth and work, sexuality, food, war, the environment, and other topics. Students apply appropriate social scientific methods to collect data, analyze, evaluate, explain, and/or solve problems in social relations and human behavior.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. show familiarity with primary Jewish texts from the ancient, medieval and modern eras, including those written by Jews of Ashkenazic and Sephardic descent;
2. demonstrate knowledge of the historical approach to the study of Jewish primary sources and show how ethical concerns change over time in response to political, economic, social, and environmental factors;
3. demonstrate knowledge of the sociological and socio-psychological approaches to Jewish ethical traditions and explain how social ethics are interdependent with other institutions in society, for example, religion, family, political and economic institutions.
4. apply sociological theory to multiple facets of their lives and in the various social institutions in which they participate; and
5. explain the ethical components of various Jewish cultural practices, values and beliefs.

All of these competencies will be demonstrated through participation in discussion and written assignments.

II. General Education requirement in Social Sciences.

Courses in this category enable students to understand how social scientists study social relations, human experiences and patterns of change over time. This course teaches you to analyze and explain the multiple perspectives found in the social sciences that underlie debates on important historical and contemporary issues. You will learn to apply appropriate social scientific methods to collect data, analyze, evaluate, explain, and/or solve problems in social relations and human behavior; and you will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how social problems impact individuals, communities and societies. By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Explain how social scientists conduct the systematic study of social relations, human experiences and patterns of change over time.
2. Analyze and explain the multiple perspectives found in the social sciences that underlie debates on important historical and contemporary issues.
3. Apply appropriate social scientific methods to collect data, analyze, evaluate, explain and/or solve problems in social relations and human behavior.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how social problems impact individuals, communities and societies.

III. Writing Intensive designation.

This course requires writing assignments totaling at least 2500 words. Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course, students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words. By the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.

IV. General Education path (GE path): Principles of Sustainability (PS).

Sustainability means "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987). The goal of this pathway is to broadly expose students to the fundamental concepts of sustainability including economic, environmental, and social aspects. It is designed to supplement education in other disciplines and to provide knowledge of the considerations necessary to make decisions in a world where resources are limited. Courses in this path should address any aspect of sustainability such as theory and principles, practice or issues, and within any component of the course such as lectures, special lectures, hands on activities, assignments, homework, group presentations, etc. This course meets two or more of the following PS GE path Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Students will define sustainability and its connection to issues of social justice, the environment, and the economy at local, regional, and global levels.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to sustainability, such as climate change, ecological footprint, and planetary carrying capacity.
3. Students will connect how sustainability relates to their lives and/or values, and how their actions and others' impact issues of sustainability at the individual, local, regional, and global levels.

To learn more about the curriculum of the sustainability minor:
http://www.csun.edu/sustainability/curriculum/minor-electives/
To learn more about sustainability on campus or careers in sustainability:
http://www.csun.edu/sustainability/
To learn more about GE Paths: http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/ge-paths

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TIMELINE FOR SCHOLARLY INVESTIGATION INTO APPLIED ETHICS

*** NOTE: This schedule may change. See Canvas for the most up-to-date information. ***

Week 1: **What this course is, and basic terminology** **Learning outcomes** ***Know...*** Policies in the syllabus; Where to find information on the course Canvas site; Who your classmates are; How to maintain academic honesty; Basic information about Judaism.	**Sources:** Course syllabus Canvas self-introduction forum Plagiarism tutorial Pluralism Project. "Judaism." America's Many Religions. http://www.pluralism.org/religion/judaism	**Activities (all due dates 11:59 p.m.):** Self-introduction (8/31) and responses (9/3) Syllabus scavenger hunt (9/3) Academic honesty tutorial (9/3) Orientation to Judaism quiz (9/3) Sign up for reminder texts (8/31)
Weeks 2 & 3 **Tools for doing Jewish ethics** ***Be able to...*** Explain what ethics is; Explain what applied ethics is; Explain where the idea of human dignity comes from in Judaism; Explain Jewish ideas about the ethics of language;	Jennifer Thompson. 2015. "What does it mean to learn ethics," Chapter 2, *Applied Ethics* eText. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. 2016. "Issues in Jewish Ethics: Speech and Lashon HaRah." Jewish Virtual Library. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Speech_and_Lashon_Ha-Ra.html Hershey H. Friedman, "Geneivat Da'at: The Prohibition Against Deception in Today's World." *Jewish Law*. Hershey Friedman, "Placing a Stumbling Block before the Blind Person: An In-Depth Analysis." *Jewish Law*. "Rebukes and Responses," Bradley Artson, MyJewishLearning.com "Mastering the Art of Rebuke," Jonathan E. Blake, ReformJudaism.org. Selected texts from *How to Do Good and Avoid Evil* (pdf). Norman Lamm, "Bal Taschit: The Torah Prohibits Wasteful Destruction" Rabbi Jeff Summit, "Ba'al Taschit – Do Not Destroy" (video) Rabbi Jeff Summit, "Pikuach Nefesh—Protecting Human Life" (video) Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, "The Value of Human Life" (video) Rabbi Keith Stern, "B'Tzelem Elohim" (video)	Reading quiz (9/14) Infographic salon (9/17)
Weeks 4 & 5:	Jon Ronson. 2015. "How one stupid tweet blew up Justine Sacco's life." *New York Times*.	Review last week's readings and Great Answers From

Social media, language, and human dignity ***Be able to...*** Apply Jewish ideas about human dignity and language to the contemporary situations of social media shaming and sharing information online	Sam Biddle. 2014. "Justine Sacco is good at her job, and how I came to peace with her." *Gawker.* Monica Lewinsky. 2015. "The price of shame." TED. Rabbi Jill Maderer. 2015. "On public shaming, a compassion deficit, and Monica Lewinsky." BlogRS, The blog of Congregation Rodeph Shalom. Gil Student, "A Torah Guide for the Digital Age: The Ten Tenets of Social Media." Jewish Action: The Magazine of the Orthodox Union. August 24, 2012. Gil Student, "Instagram and Jewish Law." Torah Musings. November 18, 2014. Jillian Jordan, Roseanna Sommers, and David Rand. "The real problem with hypocrisy." New York Times, Jan. 13, 2017. David Streitfeld, "For fact-checking website Snopes, a bigger role brings more attacks." New York Times. December 25, 2016. Scott Shane. "From Headline to Photograph, a Fake News Masterpiece." New York Times. January 18, 2017. Tom Rosenstiel. "Six questions that will tell you what media to trust." American Press Institute. October 22, 2013. Jennifer Thompson. "Outing White Supremacists is Kosher According to Judaism. Here's Why." Haaretz, Aug. 19, 2017.	Students document. Reading quiz (9/28) Reading questions (9/28) Salon (10/1)
Weeks 6 & 7: The meanings of choice and character Explain what Mussar is, both historically and today; Explain what virtue ethics is; Explain what logotherapy is; Compare secular and religious approaches to building moral character.	Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (entire) Jennifer Thompson. *Applied Ethics* eText, selections Claussen, Geoffrey. "The American Jewish revival of Musar." *The Hedgehog Review* 12.2 (2010): 63+. Edith Brotman, *Mussar Yoga.* Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights. Foreword (p. ix-x), Introduction (p. 1-8), "How to practice Mussar yoga," (9-24). (pdf) Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar.* Boston: Trumpeter, 2007. P. 253-275; 295-297. (pdf) Rabbi Jordan Bendat Appell. "Character & Mussar Practices." Character Day Q&A. (video) Tiffany Shlain (director). "The Science of Character." (video) Tiffany Shlain (director). "The Adaptable Mind." (video) Tiffany Shlain (director). "The Making of a Mensch." (video)	Review Great Answers From Students document. Reading quiz (10/12) Reading questions (10/12) Experiential Mussar activity Salon (10/15)
Weeks 8 & 9: Climate change	2014. "Climate Change Debate." *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. HBO. National Academy of Sciences and The Royal Society. 2014. *Climate change:*	Review Great Answers From Students document.

Explain why climate change is happening, its current effects, and its likely future effects; Identify ethical issues posed by climate change in individual, business, and societal contexts; Identify personal changes that could have an effect on climate change; Explain Jewish perspectives on climate change.	*evidence and causes*. Margaret E. Atwood. 2015. "It's not climate change—it's everything change." *Matter*. Max Fisher. "Map: These are the cities that climate change will hit first." Washington Post, October 9, 2013. Suzanne Goldenberg. 2015. "Exxon knew of climate change in 1981, email says—but it funded deniers for 27 more years." *The Guardian*. Monte Morin. 2014. "Americans use twice as much water as they think they do, study says." *Los Angeles Times*. Thomas Elias, "Uncertain future for California's anti-smog efforts," Los Angeles Daily News, Jan. 30, 2017. Arthur Green. 2008. "Judaism and Creation Theology." *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Ideas*. Jay Michaelson. 2014. "Climate change is a sin. Here's how to repent for it." *Religion Dispatches*. Elliot Dorff et al. 2015. "A Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis." The Shalom Center. Daniel Weber, "Judaism and Science: Contemporary Approaches to Global Climate Change." Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired by Torah.	Reading quiz (10/26) Reading questions (10/26) Experiential climate change reduction activity Contribute to salon (10/29) Midterm self-assessment (10/29)
Weeks 10 & 11: Violence Define violence; Explain what we do and do not know (very generally) about violence in our society; Describe Jewish ideas about human responsibilities concerning violence; Generate multiple ideas about how humans can practice peacemaking and reduce violence.	Larry Ray, 2011. "What is Violence?" *Violence and Society*. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 1. Focus on first pages (through 11) and 22-end. Elisabeth Rosenthal. 2013. "More guns = more killing." *New York Times*. Andrew Solomon. 2012. "Anatomy of a murder-suicide." *New York Times*. Jay Dickey and Mark Rosenberg. 2012. "We won't know the cause of gun violence until we look for it." *Washington Post*. David Cole. 2013. "Who pays for the right to bear arms?" *New York Times*. Mike Spies. 2015. "When a bullet enters a body: gun violence as seen by a trauma surgeon." *The Trace*. Brenda Gazzar. 2014. "LAPD hosts first Jewish community forum in the San Fernando Valley." *Los Angeles Daily News*. Mark Katz. 2012. "The Jewish view on weapons." *Tablet*. Shlomo M. Brody. 2013. "Halakhic perspectives on gun control." *Jewish Ideas Daily*. Aaron Alexander. 2012. "Unnecessary danger: a reflection on guns, violence, and personal safety." *Huffington Post*.	Review Great Answers From Students document. Reading quiz (11/9) Reading questions (11/9) Experiential activity on peacemaking Salon (11/12)

	Rachel Yehuda, "How trauma and resilience cross generations." On Being with Krista Tippett. July 30, 2015. Additional sources TBA.	
Weeks 12 - 14: Ethics at work Explain the value of work according to Jewish sources; Explain the value of wealth according to Jewish sources; Explain the role of work in our lives according to Jewish sources; Explain the relationship of work to Shabbat; Describe some social-scientific findings about the relationship of human happiness to working conditions; Describe some social-scientific findings about the relationship of human happiness to wealth. Differentiate among cases when Jewish law requires whistleblowing, encourages it, and permits it; Apply Jewish law and thought to well-known whistleblowing cases; Identify ethical issues in the workplace in your own experience or that you might encounter in the future.	Hershey H. Friedman. 2008. "Ideal occupations: the Talmudic perspective." *Jewish Law: Examining Halacha, Jewish Issues, and Secular Law*. Rabbi David Wolpe. 2013. "More Money than God." Loaded: Jews and Money series, Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. 2016. "Shabbat: What is Shabbat?" Jewish Virtual Library. Ronald L. Eisenberg. n.d. "Shabbat's Work Prohibition." My Jewish Learning. Barry Schwartz, "The way we think about work is broken." TED Talks, March 2014. Dan Ariely, "What makes us feel good about our work?" TED Talks, October 2012. Jordan Weissmann. 2015. "This Study on Happiness Convinced a CEO to Pay All of His Employees at Least $70,000 a Year." *Slate*. Richard J. Light. 2015. "How to Live Wisely." *New York Times*. Barry Leff. 2007. "Whistleblowing: The Requirement to Report Employer Wrongdoing." Susan Pulliam. 2003. "How following orders can harm your career." CFO.com. Jeremy Simon. 2013. "Knowing when to blow the whistle." *Texas Enterprise*. Kirsty Matthewson. 2012. "Whistleblowing and bystander apathy: connecting ethics with social responsibility." *CSR Wire*. Damon Horowitz, "We need a 'moral operating system.'" TED Talk, May 2011. Ewen MacAskill. 2013. "Edward Snowden: how the spy story of the age leaked out." *The Guardian*. Additional sources TBA.	Review Great Answers From Students document. Reading quiz (11/30) Reading questions (11/30) Experiential activity about ethical work Salon (12/3)
Weeks 15 & 16: Ethical Will, Reflection,	Miriam Schulman. 2014. "A testament to ethics." Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University. Celebrations of Life. 2016. "Ethical wills/legacy letters."	Ethical will questions forum (12/5)

and Summing Up Explain the role of ethical wills in Jewish history and tradition; Summarize what you have learned about Jewish ethics; Write your summary in the form of an ethical will; Demonstrate your ability to explain and reflect on ethical theories and method used in this course.	Jack Riemer. n.d. "Writing and reading ethical wills." My Jewish Learning. Constance Gutke. 2014. "The ethical will, an ancient concept, is revamped for the tech age." *New York Times*. JS 318 student ethical will, 2016	Draft an ethical will (12/7) Share your ethical will for peer editing (12/7) Give feedback on classmates' ethical wills (12/10) Revise your ethical will (12/12) Complete your final self-assessment (12/14)

Partial Credit Day: December 14. ONE late or missing assignment may be turned in for up to 50% credit by 11:59 p.m. on December 14.

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IN ORDER TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, WE WILL ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:

[1]

We will write responsibly.

• The highest possible grade for work containing basic writing errors is B+, and for work with a substantial number of such errors, C+.

• Your work must be your own. Students may not work together on reading quizzes, reading questions, or self-evaluations.

• Chicago Author-Date style citations and works-cited pages are required in all work for this course unless the instructor states otherwise. Work lacking appropriate citations is considered plagiarism, regardless of intent to plagiarize.

California State University, Northridge expects honesty and integrity from all members of its community. Students who cheat on assignments or examinations, or commit plagiarism or other academic dishonesty, are subject to a failing grade in the course, and will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs.

• If I suspect plagiarism on any assignment, I will report it to the Office of Student Affairs. The student will receive zero credit for a plagiarized assignment for the first offense. Any student who commits plagiarism or inappropriate collaboration as defined above more than once during the semester will fail the course.

• It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism; ignorance is not an excuse. See Canvas for resources on maintaining academic honesty.

We will turn in all work on time, in the assigned format.

• You will need to spend about 8.25 hours per week and log in to the course several times per week to do well.

• Assignments cannot be made up after they are due. Assignments that are not turned in on time will receive zero credit. Canvas is the final arbiter about whether a submission was turned in on time.

• Partial Credit Day offers you the opportunity to turn in ONE missed assignment for up to half credit.

[1] Source: http://www.inboundmarketingagents.com/inbound-marketing-agents-blog/bid/258135/The-25-Best-Internet-Memes-of-All-Time

• Start early on your assignments. If you attempt to submit your assignments within the half-hour before the assignment is due, your submission is more likely to fail.

• Do not email your work to the professor unless specifically instructed to do so.

• Take a screenshot each time you upload an assignment that shows that you were successful, just in case any technical problems arise later. You do not need to turn in the screenshot unless the instructor asks for it, but it is wise to keep it until the course ends.

• If you run into technical problems while submitting an assignment before its deadline, take one or more screenshots that show what the problem is and send them to the instructor immediately. I will consider requests for extensions related to technical problems only if you follow these instructions.

• The Faculty Technology Department helps faculty and students with Canvas-related questions, at 818-677-3443 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We will ask for help when we need it.

• I am available by phone and email during my office hours. Be in touch if you need to clear up any material that you don't understand or if a personal crisis has arisen that affects your ability to do well in the course. I am glad to help you find ways to do well in the course when you plan ahead and try your best.

• You may also seek basic information from classmates through the Canvas "Got questions?" forum, and you may seek help with writing from the Learning Resource Center in the library.

• I am glad to accommodate students with disabilities as directed by the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD).

We will correspond professionally and regularly.

• Check your CSUN email account at least daily to keep up with announcements, updates, or clarifications to assignments.

• Use your CSUN email account. Ensure that your CSUN email account displays your full name, not "Me" or some other handle. See Canvas for email protocol in this course.

• I will try to respond to you within one business day.

• If your question is about an assignment or a policy, check the syllabus and the course FAQ before emailing me. I might not reply to an email if it asks a question covered in the syllabus or the FAQ. If you have not heard back from me in one business day, it's likely that the information is covered there.