

Service Learning in the  
Jewish Community:  
Connecting the Community  
and Jewish Studies

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Jody Myers and Terry Hatkoff

Northridge, California  
Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program  
California State University, Northridge  
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## Foreword

“Service Learning in the Jewish Community: Connecting the Community and Jewish Studies” was written for Jewish communal leaders, Jewish Studies directors, and faculty who would like to involve undergraduates in Jewish communal agencies and educational institutions. This booklet outlines the theoretical and historical basis for this form of experiential education. It provides a “how to” guide for establishing a service learning class, using the course at California State University, Northridge, as an example.

This publication was made possible by a generous grant from the Max and Pauline Zimmer Family Foundation. The Zimmer Family Foundation has supported a variety of programs that develop leadership, foster Jewish identity, and provide Jewish education. Our students have benefitted from the Foundation’s largesse since 1999.

We welcome all responses to this article. Those of you who are considering establishing service learning courses and programs of your own are invited to contact us for further explanations and suggestions.

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**SERVICE LEARNING IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY:  
CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY AND JEWISH  
STUDIES**

Jewish Studies in the university has always relied upon the support of the surrounding Jewish community. Unlike most other university departments, Jewish Studies programs often were founded and expanded because of communal assistance and influence. The Jewish community has taken pride in the existence of a Jewish Studies program nearby, gains from the participation of the faculty in community life, and looks to the faculty as models of learned achievement for young and old. From the vantage point of the Jewish Studies program, local interest in faculty research and teaching boosts morale, stimulates productivity, and provides an outlet for additional teaching and service.

It may be quite a challenge, however, to sustain a mutually supportive relationship between a university's Jewish Studies program and the local Jewish community. Service learning can

function to link the two in a manner that benefits faculty, students and community. With this in mind, the Jewish Studies Program at California State University, Northridge, established in 1996 a new course, "Service Learning in the Jewish Community." The involvement of the local Jewish community was integral to the course founding, its design, and its financial support. The Jewish Studies Program administers the course and supplies the faculty who provide its academic content. All parties have witnessed firsthand the benefits of involving undergraduates in Jewish educational, social welfare, and public relations institutions. Students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, learned about American Jewish society, become civically involved and potentially committed to the future of the Jewish community. Upon completion of the course, they receive college units and a stipend.

This booklet was written for Jewish communal leaders and Jewish Studies directors and faculty who may be considering creating a service learning program. The first part of this booklet discusses the theoretical and historical basis for service learning education. The second part describes the practical work involved by using the course at California State University, Northridge, as a model. Our experience teaching and facilitating the service learning course guide both parts of this discussion.

#### **DEFINITION**

*Service learning* is currently the preferred term in the field

of higher education for a particular mode of experiential education that combines work experience in a community setting, academic study, and reflection. It is distinct from the narrower *internship*, which implies the acquisition of specific professional skills; *field work* is the term for data collection and research; and *community service*, which has no explicit connection to academic learning or structured reflection. Over the past two decades, as service learning has become increasingly included into high school and university curricula, educational theorists and historians have defined it in multiple ways.<sup>1</sup> One widely accepted definition is the following from the Commission on National and Community Service:

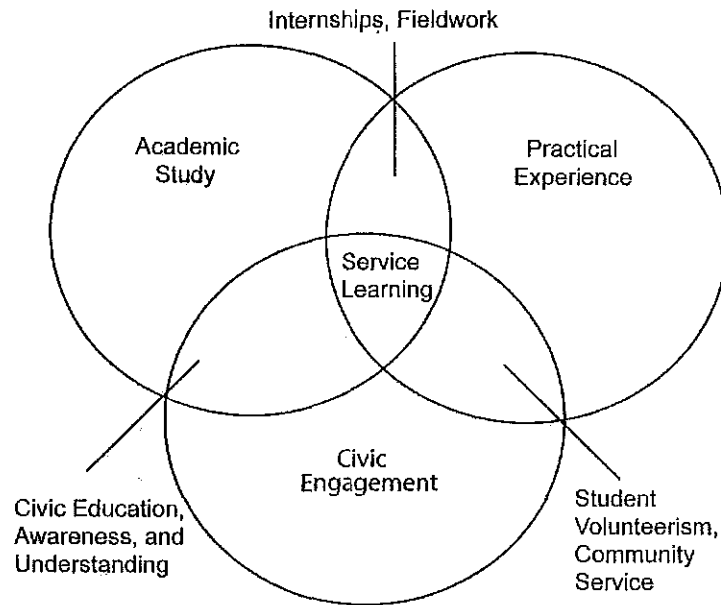
A service learning program provides educational experiences

- a. in which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community;
- b. That are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity;
- c. That provide a student with opportunities to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom

and into the community and help to foster the sense of caring for others.<sup>2</sup>

Among its many objectives, service learning unabashedly aims to inculcate students with emotional sensitivity and moral values.

Elizabeth Hollander, through the National Campus Compact,<sup>3</sup> offers this visual definition of service learning:



According to her understanding, service learning is the result of a carefully balanced combination of academic learning, practical experience, and civic engagement. It is constructed to focus on

both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring.

Service learning can be instituted in two general ways.

First, it may be a component of a course. For example, an introductory sociology class may require students to devote a number of hours working at a local food bank and to write about this experience in light of sociological theory. Alternatively, service learning may be established as a free-standing course. In this case, a student's responsibility consists primarily of work in the community. Such a service learning course would also include structured reflection, some academic study, and writing, but the work experience is primary. There is a greater investment of time by all participants – instructor, students, and community agency – but the rewards to all are greater.

While this essay's analysis of service learning is applicable to both forms of service learning, the free-standing service learning course is presented as a model in the second half of this essay.

## THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning in America has three immediate

progenitors: an educational movement promoting experiential learning, programs for civilian youth service, and the service mission of colleges and universities.

Educators were among the first to promote service learning. Influenced by John Dewey's linking of education and democracy, leaders of the Progressive Movement in American education insisted that education be a continuous reconstruction of living experience. From the late nineteenth century until 1950, they achieved some success at inducing schools to adopt community projects as a major curricular and pedagogical tool of education.<sup>4</sup> Civilian youth service programs, conceived as both an antidote to youth unemployment and a mode of practical education in a variety of technical trades, burgeoned during the inter-war period. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration placed thousands of young adults in low-wage public works jobs. These youth programs disbanded with the coming of World War II, and the Progressive movement collapsed at the beginning of the 1950s. Yet, educational theorists continued to develop the concepts of "active learning" or community-based

education as the most effective mode of transmitting knowledge to the young. During the 1960s, youth service was once again promoted by the Federal government during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in the form of the Peace Corps, VISTA, and the Teacher Corps. The vast majority of youth service programs, however, have been sponsored by private agencies such as religious groups, civic and service clubs, and scouting organizations.<sup>5</sup>

Service learning also has its roots in the mission statements of colleges and universities. Many private institutions of higher education were established by Christian denominations that regarded community service as an expression of religious belief; even if these institutions secularize, the community service component may remain in the curriculum. Secular institutions of higher education are likely to have in their mission statements the goal of fostering the moral development of their students. Commitment to public service is invariably included within the mandates of public colleges and universities that are funded by the state; these institutions typically are charged to promote applied

science and technology for the benefit of regional, state, and national economies. Community colleges are similarly charged with a service mission, though one that is more closely linked to job training.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE CURRENT CONCERN FOR SERVICE LEARNING**

Over the past few decades, enthusiasm and support for service learning has grown significantly. In diverse cultures throughout the world, service learning is being promoted as a vehicle for addressing the ills of society and the shortcomings of educational systems.<sup>7</sup> Nations at all levels of development are plagued by social problems and complain that their school systems are inadequately educating their students for a global economy. Governments, service agencies, and parties in the private sector are asking citizens to voluntarily assist in the multiple tasks of social reform. They regard college and university students as a group with the most potential for this type of service; they presume that students have free time, large stores of energy, no serious job or family commitments, and – in government-funded schools – they

are beholden to the state for their education.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, students are seen as needing the socializing influence of community service.

Furthermore, the call for service learning often accompanies a critique of higher education. Colleges and universities are being faulted both for failing to adequately train students for the current job market and for creating an elite class of graduates concerned only with furthering their self-interests. Critics from across the political spectrum are asking that schools produce graduates with more appropriate knowledge and skills. They urge instructors to instill within their students civic-oriented values and the desire to support and promote the common good.<sup>9</sup>

The call to be more responsive to the surrounding community is also being heard within the higher education system. Faculty and university administrators seem to be motivated by a host of moral and pedagogical concerns. Many applications of admission to prestigious colleges ask about applicants' community service experiences. Campus-sponsored student activities programs commonly include a volunteer service component. Learning specialists point to research showing that experiential pedagogy



enhances students' comprehension and retention of new information.<sup>10</sup> In addition, there is the pragmatic realization that the local, regional, and national supporters and sponsors of baccalaureate-level higher education – including research universities – want graduates who can contribute to the advancement of public life and commerce. Colleges and universities regard community service as a valuable tool for obtaining public support. While there seems to be wide agreement that students should engage in community service work, there is less agreement on whether and how such service should be made part of students' graduation requirements.

Community service integrated with academic study and structured reflection – that is, service learning – presents the most satisfactory way that colleges and universities can be responsive to the public while acting in accordance with their function as academic institutions of higher education. Applying theoretical knowledge to lived experience and toward resolving problems within the public sector is certainly an appropriate component of undergraduate education. We acknowledge that faculty are trained

in and hired for their mastery of a specific discipline and may not be capable or desirous of administering a free-standing community service course. However, incorporating a service learning component into an existing course may well be within the sphere of many faculty members' expertise and interest.

### **BENEFITS OF SERVICE LEARNING**

Service learning should not be regarded as merely a good compromise between the university and the public, or between research and applied knowledge – although it certainly can serve that function. Service learning brings a multitude of benefits to students, faculty, university, and community. The following is an enumeration of some of these:

**Students** (1) apply academic knowledge to real-life settings under the supervision of trained professionals; (2) take direct responsibility for their learning; (3) practice working effectively with supervisors, co-workers, and clients; (4) independently sort out the raw material of their experiences and communicate their insights to others; (5) confront at close range a

segment of society or an aspect of communal life previously unfamiliar to them; (6) test their interests and skills in a potential career; (7) enhance their resume; (8) find potential mentors and a network of contacts; (9) earn credits toward graduation; and (10) in some cases, receive financial remuneration for their labor.

The faculty member assigned to a service learning course (1) designs a learning experience that can be excitingly different than the typical one in which students remain passive; (2) witnesses the application of his/her academic knowledge to the world outside the classroom; (3) assesses the relevance of specific data to lived experience; (4) sees, relatively quickly, the effect of his/her teaching on the students and on the community-at-large; and (5) benefits from the personally rewarding role of guiding students toward an understanding and achievement of their life-long goals, at a depth not usually possible within the regular framework of university life.

Service learning promotes a cooperative relationship between the university and the surrounding community in several ways: (1) Contact with student workers promotes within communal

agencies and the public-at-large an awareness of and appreciation for higher education in general and the sponsoring institution in particular. (2) Service learning programs allow post-secondary institutions to demonstrate their commitment to improve the society in which they are embedded. Students and faculty serve as mediators in this process. Their assessments and reflections offer both the university and the agencies a valuable perspective on how each functions in the environment. (3) Finally, service learning fosters a greater sense of civic responsibility among the student body and the faculty who work along with them.

#### **SERVICE LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAMS AND DEPARTMENTS**

A service learning course that places students in Jewish communal agencies situates the academic subject matter of Jewish Studies into the lived community. Studies of American Jewish sociology, political science, and religious life become resources for understanding and analyzing the settings in which students work and the situations in which they find themselves. For example, a

student working in a Jewish Community Center after-school day-care program will observe at close range the challenges of articulating the content and contours of American Jewish identity. The JCC mission and program can be used to illustrate the process of American Jewish acculturation, political integration, and so on. Research methods or modes of analysis may be taught more effectively in the context of such a service learning project than in a straightforward classroom setting. The experiential framework of service learning is a highly effective way of teaching critical reading and thinking skills.

A service learning option within Jewish Studies course offerings is helpful in recruiting students to the field and supporting the students already committed to it. Students of all backgrounds and majors may enroll in a Jewish service learning course for a variety of personal and pragmatic reasons. Exposed to the actual, quite complex reality of Jewish society, their interest in Jewish culture and history may be piqued, and they are likelier to enroll in other Jewish Studies courses. Students who have a formal concentration in Jewish Studies often regard service learning as

simply a logical extension of their academic study of the Jewish people, or as a way of contributing to the Jewish world that they investigate in the classroom. Some concentrators are eager for a work placement in a Jewish agency as a way to test a potential career.

Service learning is also a particularly effective way of teaching students about the values and concerns that animate the American Jewish community. Typically, a basic course on Judaism will introduce the concepts of *tzedaka* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and the central importance of the community. Every course on modern Jewry must deal with the diversity of Jews and the tremendous gaps between them in matters of religion, class, and politics. Classes dealing with American Jewry invariably deal with the tension between universalism and particularism that is a central feature of their culture. Direct exposure to Jewish communal institutions and their clientele will give a tangible reality to these more abstract theoretical concepts.

Unfortunately, many people in the Jewish community may not value or understand the importance of academic research, the

need for a highly specialized Jewish Studies curriculum, or the scientific approach to the study of religion. A service learning course offered in a Jewish Studies program, however, will likely receive support from all sectors of the Jewish community. It has wide appeal and is relatively easy to explain. A Jewish Studies program that places its students within Jewish communal institutions is creating a highly visible sign of its own importance as well as its relevance to the community. A community that benefits from a Jewish Studies program's service learning course is likelier to financially support such a program.

#### **JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JEWISH COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP**

In today's relatively tolerant and religiously voluntaristic environment, the participation of young people in Jewish communal life cannot be taken for granted. It is not enough to inculcate loyalty and a sense of belonging; both must be earned and nurtured by the community. Students who engage in meaningful work in Jewish communal agencies become aware and quite proud of the

extraordinary generosity of the Jewish community in attending to the needs of Jews and non-Jews. We found that even those students who had benefitted from the community's largesse had not been aware of its scope. While students learn to critically assess the performance of the agencies in which they work and so may be aware of their weaknesses, they invariably also come to appreciate the ideals expressed in the mission of such institutions. Service learning is an important tool in the process of raising Jewish children toward becoming responsible and contributing members of the Jewish community and of society-at-large. Of course, such service learning may also be a path into the creation of future Jewish leaders and communal professionals. Finally, community agencies benefit directly from the free labor provided by student interns.

Service learning programs can serve as vehicles for enhanced community relations. Non-Jews may enroll in a service learning course for the beneficial experiences it offers, and their work in the non-profit institutions of the Jewish community will give them a broader – and likely more positive – perspective than

that typically received from conventional sources. They will learn that Jewish communal agencies are funded primarily by the Jewish community, and that most of the professional staff and volunteer providers are Jews, but that many agencies provide assistance to needy non-Jews without harboring any proselytizing objectives. A service learning program establishes links between different ethnic and religious groups and fosters understanding.

## **SERVICE LEARNING IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY: A MODEL COURSE**

“Service Learning in the Jewish Community” was a joint project of the Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), and the Jewish Federation, Valley Alliance (the local arm of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation). CSUN is one of the twenty-three campuses of the California State University, a comprehensive public university system. The Northridge campus is located in the greater Los Angeles area, and its current enrollment is approximately 29,000 students. It is an ethnically diverse campus, and the vast majority of its students commute to school. A central component of CSUN's mission is to recognize "teaching, research, and public service as its major responsibilities." The greater Los Angeles area has a Jewish population of approximately 500,000, half of whom live in the neighborhoods served by CSUN. The service learning course was initiated when the director of the Valley Alliance, together with CSUN's Jewish Studies Program, submitted a proposal to the Jewish Federation's funding agency to fund a pilot class. At the

same time, the Jewish Studies Program submitted a proposal for the new course. Both the university and local Jewish communal leaders recognized their mutual interest in providing CSUN undergraduates the opportunity to engage in community service along with structured reflection and supervision. The pilot grant supported the course for two years. Subsequently, the service learning course received funding from private foundations, while 20% of the funding is supplied by the university.

The course was designed by faculty who were not experts in the field of service learning. The instructor had many years experience teaching in the Sociology Department at CSUN and had supervised several undergraduates in a sociology internship course. She was familiar with the local Jewish community and had experience serving on her synagogue board. She researched models of service learning (described earlier in this paper) to guide the development of the course objectives and structures. In addition, she met with leaders of the Jewish Federation to become familiar with Los Angeles' non-profit Jewish communal institutions and to develop contacts with various agency leaders who would sponsor

the student interns. The director of the Jewish Studies Program, a professor of Religious Studies, advised the instructor throughout this process and completed the steps necessary for course approval within the university.

The three learning objectives for this class are: (1) to civically engage students in the Jewish communal setting; (2) to offer students the opportunity to explore potential careers in the Jewish community through hands-on experience; and (3) to provide the academic study of the Jewish community and its institutions by focusing on the social, educational and community relations services offered by the Los Angeles Jewish community. All three of these objectives are important and intertwined. In order to maximize the success of the students, only twelve students are accepted into this class. Those chosen are of junior or senior standing who maintain a B average and exhibit maturity. They must be willing to work in the field approximately eight hours per week, totaling 100 hours during the semester. They attend approximately seven class meetings, complete reading assignments, write about their work experiences on a weekly basis, and submit a

final paper. Students who successfully complete the course receive three units of semester credit. Additionally, private funds provide each student with a stipend of \$450 (*See course syllabus in Appendix, document A*).

Recruiting and interviewing students is an important task for the course instructor. Students learn of the course through the schedule of classes, advertisements in the student paper, and word of mouth. College credit and the stipend are attractive draws. The instructor interviews applicants in order to accept only qualified and committed students into the class. The instructor is careful to match each student's personal or career interests with an appropriate Jewish communal agency. It usually requires several phone calls to various community partners before locating the appropriate agency and field supervisor. Previous students' experiences in these agencies assist the instructor in assessing the appropriateness of the match.

It is very important to carefully explain to the community partners, and specifically to the field supervisors, what is expected of them. Although the intern provides "free labor," the supervisor

bears a responsibility to the student intern. Supervisory responsibilities include providing the intern with a meaningful experience, including the intern in staff meetings, showing him or her how the agency works, and serving as a mentor. The field supervisor must sign weekly time sheets and evaluate the intern twice during the semester. The field supervisors are told that, in addition to on-site training, the instructor will coach the student on proper work etiquette, how to approach problems that may arise, and how to maintain an optimal relationship with colleagues and clients. Students are told that they may call the instructor at any time during the semester if there is a problem or a particular challenge with a student. Typically, there is limited communication between the field supervisor and instructor during the course of the semester.

Finding good placements and suitable supervisors is relatively easy in a city like Los Angeles, which has so many Jewish communal service agencies under the auspices of the Jewish Federation. Pre-law students have worked with Bet Tzedek (a Jewish legal aid agency). Pre-social work students have worked at

the Jewish Family Service's Family Violence Project or Beit T'shuvah (a Jewish recovery house) or the Jewish Home for the Aged. Students interested in public relations have worked with the Jewish Federation's publicity department. Students interested in education have worked in pre-school or after-school programs at various Jewish Community Centers. Business students have worked at the Jewish Labor Committee (labor-union mediation), the Jewish Vocational Service, and the American Jewish Committee. These are just a few examples of the possibilities. All these agencies can utilize students of any background. Only Jewish student interns are recommended to placements in synagogues, youth groups, and other religious educational institutions.

Each student and field supervisor must agree to work with the other. The intern must independently contact the agency for an interview and meet with the approval of the field supervisor. Ideally, this relationship is worked out prior to the start of the semester. Each student signs a contract with his or her field supervisor. The contract explicitly states the responsibilities of each party (*see Appendix, document B*).

It is crucial for the instructor to gain the students' trust. Undergraduates are not pre-professionals dependent on a good review for their career advancement, and consequently they require greater support, encouragement, and advice. In order to facilitate this, the instructor must be able to be reached should a crisis occur between the class meetings.

#### REQUIRED READING AND WRITING

At the first class meeting, the students are given guidelines for service learners which were created to assist in making the course the most productive experience possible (*See Appendix, document C*). Each student is instructed to submit required signed time sheets. Weekly journals are also a component of the course. These journals should include first impressions, what happened during the service experience, what the student did, what the effect of this experience was, how they felt about their involvement and the people they worked with and what was learned (*see Appendix, document D*). Students are encouraged to report critical incidents that occurred, for example, an event that took place in which a



crucial decision was made, a conflict occurred, procedures were modified, or a problem was resolved. These reflections allow the students to examine the structure of non-profit organizations and the needs of the community from a personal perspective. The instructor's reading of these reflections enables her to give students regular feedback and monitor the quality of their service. In addition, there are assigned readings drawn from various academic and popular Jewish journals. These provide knowledge of the American Jewish community and focus specifically on the Jewish community in Los Angeles. (*See course syllabus in Appendix, document A*).

#### **CLASS MEETINGS**

Students meet every other week for a two hour class. At each class meeting the students must hand in their typed journal entries and time sheets which have been signed by their field supervisor. Each student's previous journal entries, now marked with comments, are returned to the students. Students are required to report to the class about their work experiences and may share

their journal reflections. During the class, it is important that the instructor guide the class discussions around the reflections and tie them to the other course material. This includes the course readings, which are discussed during the meetings, and the presentations of guest speakers. Professional leaders from the Los Angeles Jewish community are invited to speak to the class to provide the students with a direct and personal look at Jewish communal service. Once during the semester, a career counselor from the university makes a presentation to the class about how to use the work experience on their personal resume and in seeking employment. The small class size enables the students to connect with these speakers and benefit both academically and personally from the experience. During the course meetings students are also advised on professional deportment. At the end of the course, students send thank you letters to their field supervisor and to the foundation that provided their stipends.

#### **EVALUATION OF STUDENTS**

Students are graded on the quality of their fieldwork, their

class participation, their journal entries and their evaluation research paper (described below). The field supervisor determines the quality of the fieldwork twice during the semester, after the student has completed 50 hours and then after 100 hours of work (see *Appendix, document E*). While field supervisors are encouraged to call the instructor if they have any special concerns at any time during the semester, they typically provide feedback only when they complete the formal evaluation forms. Students are also graded on the thoroughness of their journal entries. Finally, students must write an evaluation research paper. In this paper the student measures the effect of the agency program in light of the mission it sets out to accomplish. In order to do this, each student must meet with various agency employees, read the mission statement, and, if possible, examine the budget and funding sources. The student then presents his or her paper orally to the class and submits a written version to the instructor. The research, composition, and presentation help the students assimilate their experience with the agency.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE COURSE

At the end of the semester students fill out class evaluation forms (see *Appendix, document F*). These include an anonymous, confidential evaluation of the instructor, the classroom experience, and the reading and writing assignments. This evaluation is submitted to the Jewish Studies Program director and returned to the instructor only after final grades are submitted. The second evaluation form focuses on the student's placement, the quality of the supervision and the work assignment. This evaluation is used by the instructor for decisions regarding future placements.

## SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

"Even though my Major is Psychology, in the internship I learned how to sort out problems with not only children, but colleagues as well. I loved every aspect of it, I earned a grade, and I even got paid."

"I learned a great deal about the agencies of the Jewish community. It really made me appreciate it more. I am involved much more in

the community and am much more aware of my personal identity."

"This course has shown me the love I have for children and how I would like to teach and be around them. Being placed in the Jewish community was the best."

"Through my service, class lectures and speakers I learned a vast majority of information not only about the Jewish community, but also about its agencies, networks and ideals. I also received a vast amount of knowledge about non-profit agencies."

"I learned a lot from my hands-on experience and that knowledge can't be learned from a book. How to deal with people is so important, and that was exactly what this class taught."

"The journals are a plus. Being able to reminisce on my day was helpful. It made me look at my actions and see what I did wrong, and then fix it."

"I really enjoyed the readings and they sort of helped me to see other perspectives in Judaism."

"Through the speakers I learned a vast majority of information not only about the Jewish community but also about its agencies, networks and ideals."

"I thought the speaker who gave the resume writing workshop was helpful. I have already used some of the tips in tweaking my resume and it looks great."

#### **SAMPLE SUPERVISOR COMMENTS**

"The intern has been an asset to our children's museum and staff! I have seen a great deal of growth and self-assurance in her over the last several months!"

"The intern developed a close relationship with every student she met. She has terrific follow-through and sought out additional assistance from professionals at the Temple when necessary. We will miss her very much."

"The intern did a fine job with the time he had – I wish it would have been more. He made a vital contribution to motivating our solicitors by regularly updating our newsletter."

The community outreach coordinator of the Family Violence Project writes, "this class provided us with two exceptional women students during the last two years. One student subsequently was hired as a full-time employee."

The executive director of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance writes, "This innovative program has brought together different ethnic groups and our social service structure. The class discussions, teaching, field learning and supervision have created a synergy that positively affects the students, the agencies, the university and our community."

## APPENDIX A

California State University, Northridge  
Jewish Studies 394

Dr. Terry Hatkoff  
Fall, 2000

### SERVICE LEARNING IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

#### Office Hours:

M 1-2 pm in FOB 315

Phone: 677-3591

Tu 4-4:20 pm in HG9

Phone: 677-3051

every other starting 9/6 Wed. 1-2 pm

Phone: 677-3007

in FOB 213

**E-mail:** [terry.hatkoff@csun.edu](mailto:terry.hatkoff@csun.edu)

**Pager:** 872-3770 (voice mail)

This class is a three unit service learning experience and an upper division GE class. Over the fall semester students will have hands-on experience in a Jewish Community Agency while they are performing a service for others. I have 3 main objectives this semester: (1) increase student awareness of the Los Angeles Jewish Community and the diverse population that its agencies serve; (2) offer career development; and (3) increase student involvement and commitment to community service. Students are expected to spend 6-8 hours a week for 15 weeks in the field (100 hours total). I will arrange students' placements in an agency with student's approval. Each student must keep a detailed weekly journal of their work experience. Writing in the journal will help reflection on the experience. Students will share their experiences with the class. Students are responsible for submitting weekly time sheet signed by their field supervisor.

Bi-monthly class meetings every other Wednesday begin on Sept. 6 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Students will be expected to complete class readings by assigned dates. The readings listed below may be supplemented with additional readings over the course of the semester.

Each student is expected to write an evaluation research paper at the conclusion of their service learning work experience. This will

include a discussion of who is served by this agency and how the agency serves the community, how policies are made, where funding is obtained, as well as an evaluation of how well the mission/goals of the agency are being met. The detailed requirements for this paper will be discussed in class. Each student will also be expected to give an oral presentation of the paper to the class.

Student's grades will be determined by:

Class attendance and participation

Field supervisor's evaluations at mid-semester and conclusion

Weekly journals

Student class presentation

Evaluation research paper

Students must complete all of their fieldwork hours, submit all journal entries and the evaluation research paper in order to pass the class. Grading will be +/-.

READINGS: Jewish Studies Reader available at Northridge Copy Center, 9130B Reseda Blvd.

#### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

##### Sept. 6 The American Jewish Community

READINGS: Service Learning Contract; Guidelines for Service Learners; Journal Writing Guidelines; "Building Community" by John Gardner; "United States of America," *Jewish Communities of the World, 1989*; "Jewish Communal Service Today", *Journal of Communal Service*, Vol. 71, No. 1, Fall 1994.

##### Sept. 20 The Jewish Federation and the San Fernando Valley Jewish Community

SPEAKER: Campaign Director of Jewish Federation

READINGS: "Los Angeles 1970 to the Present" by Max Vorspan, *Western States Jewish History*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, Jan. 1994; "More Jewish Families Drawn To West Valley" by Sharline Chiang, *Daily News*, July 23, 1998; "Debate Rises Over Jewish Census," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1998; the Jewish Federation promotion materials; "Jewish Charity Alliance Adapts to Modernized Spirit of Giving", *Los Angeles Times*.

##### Oct. 4 Evaluation Research

READINGS: "Evaluation Research" chapter from *The Practice of Social Research*, by Earl Babbie.

##### Oct. 18 Career Planning

SPEAKER: Career Counselor

Bring in your resume.

##### Nov. 1 Family Services

SPEAKER: Jewish Family Services

##### Nov. 15 Jewish Survival in the U.S.

SPEAKERS: Rabbis from three movements

READINGS: "Jewish Dollars Drying Up" by Gerald

Bubis, *Moment*, December 1992; "A Time Of Need and A Vision Of Hope" by Lucy Steinitz and Arthur Weidman, *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Fall 1993.

**Nov. 29 Student presentations**

Submit thank you letters to agency supervisors and Grant Foundation Board.

**Dec. 13 Student Presentations**

Final Paper Due

APPENDIX B

California State University, Northridge  
Jewish Studies Program

Dr. Terry Hatkoff  
Fall 2001

**California State University, Northridge  
Jewish Studies Service Learning Class**

Contract between CSUN Student and Field Placement Agency

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

The student is required to spend six-eight hours per week for a total of fifteen weeks at the agency (100 hours over the course of the semester). The student should have an opportunity to do hands-on work in the agency. The days and times of work are to be determined between the student and the field supervisor. In addition, if the student wishes and it is okay with the supervisor, he/she can spend more hours one week and fewer another week depending on the workload of the student and the agency. Should the student be sick or unable to keep his/her time commitment it is important that the field supervisor be notified in a timely fashion.

The student should explain to the field supervisor what he/she hopes to gain during this internship, as well as the skills and experience that the student brings with him or her. The field supervisor should then explain what he/she expects of the student in terms of duties and responsibilities.

The student is required to keep a weekly journal reflecting on that week's service experience. At the end of the week the field supervisor is to sign a sheet verifying the student's hours. The student will be given class readings and will attend class meetings every other Wednesday at California State University, Northridge with Professor Hatkoff.

The student will be receiving a stipend of \$450.00 at the successful completion of the internship as a result of a grant from the Zimmer Family Foundation.

## FIELD SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Field Supervisor will be asked to fill out two evaluations of the student's performance. The faculty advisor, Dr. Terry Hatkoff, will provide the Field Supervisor with a form and the due dates. Field Supervisor questions or problems should be directed to Dr. Hatkoff at CSUN's Jewish Studies Office, (818) 677-3007.

The student and field supervisor should engage in continuing discussions over the course of the semester. It is hoped that the student will have an opportunity to sit in on agency meetings and learn how the agency functions and its goals.

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Student

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Field Supervisor

## APPENDIX C

California State University, Northridge  
Jewish Studies Program

Dr. Terry Hatkoff  
Fall 2001

### GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE LEARNERS

As you begin your service relationship with a community agency, you are probably eager to get involved and make a difference in the lives of people with whom you work and the agencies you serve. These guidelines were created to assist you in having the best and most productive experience possible.

1. Ask for help when in doubt.  
Your field supervisor understands the issues at your agency and can assist you in determining the best way to respond to difficult or uncomfortable situations. Please approach him or her with problems or questions as they arise. Feel free to contact me for assistance at 677-3007 or 872-3770 (voice mail pager).
2. Be punctual and responsible.  
Although you are volunteering your time, you are participating in the agency as a reliable, trustworthy and contributing member of the team. Both the administrators and the persons whom you serve rely on your punctuality and commitment to completing your service hours. Avoid making promises or commitments to your supervisor you cannot keep.
3. Call if you anticipate lateness or absence.  
Call your supervisor if you are unable to come in or if you anticipate being late. Be mindful of your commitment.
4. Respect the privacy of all clients.  
If you are privy to confidential information with regard to the persons with whom you are working (e.g., organizational files or personal stories, etc.), it is vital that you treat it as privileged information. You should use pseudonyms if referring to them in your journal or paper.
5. Show respect for the agencies for whom you work.  
Placement within a Jewish communal agency is an educational

opportunity and a privilege. Keep in mind, not only are you serving the community but the community is serving you by investing valuable resources in your learning.

6. Be appropriate.

You are in a work situation and are expected to treat your supervisor and others with courtesy and kindness. Dress comfortably, neatly, and appropriately (check with your site for their conduct and dress codes). Use formal names unless instructed otherwise. Report to the agency free from the influence of drugs and alcohol.

7. Be flexible.

The level or intensity of activity at an agency is not always predictable. Your flexibility to changing situations will assist in producing positive outcomes for everyone involved.

8. Sexual harassment.

Never tolerate verbal exchange of a sexual nature or engage in behavior that might be perceived as sexual with a client or agency representative. Should you have questions or concerns about this or other harassment and discrimination issues, please contact me immediately.

\*Adapted from the California State University, Monterey Bay service learning curriculum.

APPENDIX D

California State University, Northridge  
Jewish Studies Program

Dr. Terry Hatkoff  
Fall, 2001

**KEEPING A WEEKLY JOURNAL**

You are expected to reflect on your experience in the field after each visit. These journals should include, but not be limited to:

First impressions

What happened during your service experience?

What did you do?

What were the effects of what you did?

How did you feel about your involvement?

How do you feel about the people you are working with?

Is this what you expected?

What have you learned?

These are just some prompts to get you started. These reflections will help to guide your service learning experience. If the situation presents itself you might want to include a critical incident report. This might be an event that took place this week that you observed or in which you participated. It should be an event in which a decision was made, a conflict occurred, a change was made, or a problem was resolved. Describe the event, what occurred and who was involved. Based on this event, what conclusions can you draw about this agency?

I will be the only one reading your journal entries, although you will be asked to share your experiences with the class. Remember to include not only what occurred but to add interpretative comments. You can expect to spend several hours each week writing your critical reflections. They must be carefully proofread and handed in at each class meeting. You will be penalized for late journal entries.

**Students cannot receive a passing grade in this class without turning in all of their journals.**



APPENDIX E

December 6, 2001

Lianne Gordon  
 Congregation Or Ami  
 28025 Dorothy Drive #105  
 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Dear Lianne,

Thank you again for agreeing to supervise Joshua Nadler while he is enrolled in the Jewish Studies class, Service Learning in the Jewish Community at CSUN. I know that J. is finding the experience to be extremely rewarding.

At this time I would like to ask you to fill out the first of two evaluation forms on Joshua's performance of his responsibilities. I have enclosed a form that hopefully can be filled out easily. Please feel free to add any additional comments that you think would be helpful. I would appreciate it if you could return this form to me as soon as possible either by FAX, (818) 886-3453 or by mail.

Once again, thank you for making this experience possible.

Sincerely,

Terry Smith Hatkoff, Ph.D.

California State University, Northridge  
 Jewish Studies Program

Dr. Terry Hatkoff  
 Fall 2001

Student Intern Evaluation Form by Field Supervisor

Student being evaluated: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5	Not able to evaluate
Fulfills hourly commitments						
Interacts well with co-workers						
Completes duties						
Has creative ideas						
Interacts well with children/clients						
Makes a valuable contribution to the agency						
Has a positive attitude						

Additional Comments:

Field Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F

**Evaluation for Service Learning in the Jewish Community, Fall 2001**

Please answer the following question honestly, as I appreciate any suggestion that you might have. This will in no way affect your grade. Please note that I may use your comments in any future write up of this course.

1. My field placement was with \_\_\_\_\_
2. I completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours in the field.
3. Briefly describe your activities:
4. Did you find your placement to be what you expected?
5. Did your placement give you experience which might be useful in your future career goals?
6. Rate your field placement in the following areas  
(Mark only one per row):

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Remarks
Helpfulness of Agency staff					
Adequate orientation and training					
Adequate supervision					
Meaningful tasks to perform					
Recognition of my efforts					

7. Would you recommend this site to future students?  
 Yes     No
8. Were you offered an opportunity to continue with this agency:  
 Yes, as a paid employee  
 Yes, on a volunteer basis  
 No, there was no opportunity

**Student Evaluation of Faculty/Class**

Course No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

The Jewish Studies Program appreciates you taking the time to fill out this evaluation form. The scale used is based on:  
 1-Poor 3-Below Average 5-Average 7-Above average 9-Good  
 10-Excellent

**Evaluation of Instructor**

1. How effective was the instructor? ① ③ ⑤ ⑦ ⑨ ⑩

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation of Course**

2. How much did you learn in this course? ① ③ ⑤ ⑦ ⑨ ⑩

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. If this is a General Education class how much did this course help you see the importance of the study of religion for a liberal arts education?  
 ① ③ ⑤ ⑦ ⑨ ⑩

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. If this is a class for the minor, or an elective course how worth while is the course? ① ③ ⑤ ⑦ ⑨ ⑩

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Describe one or more things about the course that you found helpful:

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What suggestions do you have about how the course might be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluations are not available to faculty until final grades are submitted.  
 FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, PLEASE USE THE REVERSE SIDE

**Thank You!**

## ENDNOTES

1. Richard J. Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction to Its Theory, Practice, and Effects," in *Advances in Education Research*, vol. 3 (Fall 1998), 7-23 [This article was originally published in *Education and Urban Society*, vol. 28, no. 2 (February 1996), 131-159]. See also Andrew Furco, "Service Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education" in *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning* (1996), 2-6; *Assessing the Impact of Service Learning: A Workbook of Strategies and Methods*, Center for Academic Excellence, Portland State University (April 1998).
2. Commission on National and Community Service, *What You Can Do For Your Country* (Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1993), 15, quoted by Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction to Its Theory, Practice, and Effects," 10.
3. "A Visual Definition," created by Dr. Elizabeth Hollander for the National Campus Compact (a coalition of college and university presidents "committed to fostering the values and skills of citizenship in students through the active involvement in public and community service.").
4. Robert C. Serow, Diane C. Calleson, Lani Parker, and Leigh Morgan, "Institutional Support for Service Learning," in *Advances in Education Research*, vol. 3 (Fall 1998), 25; Kraft, "Service Learning," 8.
5. Serow, Calleson, Parker, and Morgan, 25-26.
6. *Service Learning in Higher Education Around the World: An Initial Look*. A report by Howard A. Berry and Linda A. Chisholm, The International Partnership for Service Learning (New York, 1999), 2.
7. California Governor Gray Davis "formally asked California's state colleges and university to make community service a graduation requirement, noting that it seems a modest request for students who benefit from a taxpayer-subsidized education to give something back to the community." See "Governor Asks Colleges to Require Community Service," *Los Angeles Times* (July 16,

1999), pages A3, A19.

8. Berry and Chisholm, 11-16.
9. See the summaries of research and the extensive bibliography in the five outcomes assessment studies reprinted in *Advances in Educational Research*, vol. 3 (Fall, 1998), pp. 50-95.