

ALUMNI-LED ELECTIVES I

WFF & WGF/DS ALUMNI INSTITUTE 2024 | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024 | 11:15 AM – 12:30 PM

A JEW WHO COUPONS: NAVIGATING SOCIAL CLASS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE

Ilana Horwitz, WGF/DS Class 26

Henry

This talk aims to illuminate the present-day socioeconomic landscape within the American Jewish community. While the prevailing image often portrays American Jews as predominantly affluent, approximately one-quarter of them grapple with financial challenges. I draw on data from surveys with 2,000 Jews, and interviews with 100 Jews and discuss disparities in socioeconomic status among American Jews, exploring factors such as religious affiliation, age, gender, region, and race. Participants will come away with a better understanding of how social class shapes the contemporary Jewish experience.

ACHDUT AND EDUT: AN OPEN CONVERSATION ON SOLIDARITY TRIPS TO ISRAEL

Jay Moses, WGF/DS Class 5

27 Nassau

For alumni who have participated in or organized solidarity trips since October 7, who are considering doing so, or are just curious, we will have an open dialogue: what is the purpose and impact of such trips? How do we balance showing solidarity with avoiding “disaster tourism?” What makes for an effective and meaningful experience for participants? And any other related questions or topics that alumni wish to address.

AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE POST OCTOBER 7TH

David Manchester, WGF/DS Class 29

Lowrie

Hamas' attack on Israel has significantly impacted the American Jewish community. From the rapid increase of antisemitism and fears for personal safety to feeling isolated from groups and communities we once felt apart. Jews who self report as unengaged in Jewish life are feeling the emotional and interpersonal impact of the time. This session will utilize data from JFNA's survey program looking at American Jewish Life Following Oct 7 to explore these impacts on the Jewish community.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHAT OUR JEWISH BODIES CARRY

Ora Nitkin-Kaner, WGF/DS Class 24

Carnahan

Climate anxiety and despair are on the rise. They're isolating, and feel so visceral and personal that it can be hard to see how they're also learned responses from our familial and communal histories. In this session, we'll explore how climate emotions show up in our bodies; reflect on how we've been shaped by our ancestors' experiences; and increase our capacity to feel and act from a place of curiosity and ease.

MAKING THE MOST OF TRANSITIONS AND HOW COACHING CAN HELP

Robin Axelrod, WGF/DS Class 8 and Elliot Goldberg, WGF/DS Class 4

Dod

While it is comforting to think about life as a smooth progression from one thing to the next, reality is often a little more bumpy. During this session, we'll explore how we can lean into the transitions that we are (or about to be) experiencing and some approaches that coaches use to help others steer their way through the rockiest of times.

RESPONSES TO CALAMITY: COMMON THEMES IN EICHAH (LAMENTATIONS) AND THE LYRICS OF POST- 10/7 ISRAELI SONGS

David Rosenberg, WGF/DS Class 1

Maclean

Song is one of the most powerful ways that human beings have to respond to, make sense of, and memorialize calamity. We will consider Jewish responses in song to calamity in the book of Eichah/Lamentations and in songs that have been written in response to October 7. Texts and lyrics will be shared in Hebrew and English and read in English. Some music will be shared.

SACRED PARTNERSHIPS: BUILDING BEST BOARD PRACTICES AND NURTURING A HEALTHY BOARD CULTURE

Naomi Korb Weiss, WGF/DS Class 21

Bainbridge

What if our board strengthened and lifted up our organization every day? Whether you are a CEO, staff member, or board member, there's always more to learn about board development, best practices, and board culture. We'll explore roles and best practices and workshop challenges together. You'll walk away with a deeper understanding of successful boards and a worksheet to bridge your current governance to outstanding governance. Together we'll strengthen this sacred partnership!

SUPPORTING KIDS AND FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN A MOSTLY SECULAR WORLD

Rebecca Rosenthal, WGF/DS Class 16

Mercer

One of my guiding principles as an educator has always been preparing my students to live as Jews in the 21st century. Although that principle remains, I am thinking about the question of what that means in a post-10/7 world, especially for students and families who live primarily in a secular world. Are we asking the right questions, teaching the right topics in the right ways, creating the right relationships and more? If we only have limited time, what should be the focus of their education? If this is something you are thinking about too, please join me for this conversation. This is for anyone who works with kids, thinks about what and how kids learn, and while my lens is within a synagogue community, all are welcome to join this conversation.

THE MISHNAH AS LITERATURE

Barry Wimpfheimer, WGF/DS 9

Fitzgerald

"The Mishnah as Literature" The Mishnah is the foundation of rabbinic Judaism and a central canonical text. But is it a work of literature? In this session we will discuss the meaning of the question and whether it matters.