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# Gamliel Institute

of Kavod v'Nichum

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## Academic Bulletin – 2016/2017

Effective January 1, 2017

*This Academic Bulletin is designed to provide general information. The Bulletin does not constitute a legal obligation on the part of the Gamliel Institute. The Institute reserves the right to change, add, or delete any of this information without prior notice.*

MISSION: The Mission of the Gamliel Institute is to empower our students to lead in the reclaiming of Jewish traditions, rituals, liturgy, and practices along the entire continuum of care at the end of life. We educate them to become communal leaders: to inspire, support, organize, teach, and advocate for the full range of Chevra Kadisha work in synagogues and communities.

- I. Description: The Gamliel Institute is a center for study, leadership training, and advocacy concerning Jewish continuum-of-life practices, such as:
  - \* Dealing with life-threatening illness
  - \* Legacy and preparation of ethical wills
  - \* Preparing for death and the time of death
  - \* Care for the body – *taharah* and *shmirah*
  - \* Care for relatives and friends
  - \* Funeral and burial
  - \* Mourning, grieving, remembering
  - \* Providing comfort

Through its academic curriculum, the Gamliel Institute encourages, supports, educates, trains, and develops a strong Jewish corps of professional and volunteer leaders, who will help create and develop this continuum in their local communities. The program is based on, and includes, texts and traditions from over 2,000 years of history, and discusses historical evolution, political realities, and proven strategies. The Gamliel Institute has the potential to help shift the culture surrounding continuum-of-life issues in the Jewish community – from an attitude of denial and neglect around death to a more open attitude towards death that includes increasing awareness, acceptance, and healthy integration into family and community life.

In an environment that acknowledges the contributions of all the streams of Judaism, the Gamliel Institute brings together diverse disciplines – including community organizing, consumer advocacy, *bikkur cholim*, chaplaincy, rabbinic texts, thanatology, hospice care, grief therapy, funeral direction, cemetery management, and legacy planning – to create a matchless, comprehensive training program. The Gamliel Institute’s program of Jewish education focuses on communal obligation, including care for the poor and elderly, consumer protection, Jewish continuity, and spiritual inspiration.

II. The Gamliel Institute is a project of *Kavod v’Nichum* (“Honor and Comfort”), a North American organization that provides assistance, training, and resources about Jewish death and bereavement practice for *Chevrah Kadisha* groups and bereavement committees in synagogues and communities throughout North America.

### III. Educational Philosophy

- A. Students gain expertise through reading, listening, and participating with other students; engaging in discussion about readings, writing, research assignments, and ultimately bringing learned theory into a skilled practice base.
- B. Much of the course is based on self-directed learning. Adults engaged as participant learners in this course bring a range of curiosity, dedication and ritual practice with them; the course is designed to deepen and broaden that searching, commitment and practice.
- C. The instructor(s) guide students through posted learning materials and help develop students’ confidence in their own capacity to share, teach and lead.
- D. Students are encouraged to share reading materials, source texts, translations, manuals, and experiences.
- E. Multiple media forms are used to demonstrate and share learning. For example, a student may choose to create a short video on variations of tying a *shin* knot. Others may choose to illustrate a book about *taharah*. Others may choose to create a *Chevrah Kadisha* blog.
- F. Faculty members are expected to provide a range of options to encourage opportunities for student reflection and collaboration. The goal of each module is to create relevance and direct application of learning.

IV. Faculty members and administrators are available to aid students in contacting *Chevrah Kadisha* groups within their geographical area (if there are any).

### V. The Gamliel Institute’s Religious Advisory Board

- A. The Religious Advisory Board:
  - 1. Provides the Gamliel Institute with guidance, opinion, insight and religious direction as well as feedback and analysis regarding curriculum content, teaching methods, and program and student evaluation.
  - 2. Is made up of outstanding Jewish leaders from across the Jewish community.
- B. Opinions and position papers presented by the Gamliel Institute do not necessarily reflect the positions of the individual members of the Religious Advisory Board.

- C. The current membership of the Religious Advisory Board can be found on the Gamliel web site (<http://gamliel.institute>).

#### VI. Faculty & Staff

- A. The Teaching Faculty of the Gamliel Institute are knowledgeable, experienced in the field, and skilled teachers.
- B. Staff members are selected for their abilities, knowledge, attitude, and commitment to the goals and purposes of the Gamliel Institute. Duties of key Faculty and Staff members are set forth in section XI. Staff.

VII. Students: Students are an interdenominational and professional mix, and may include volunteer and paid members of *Chevrei* Kadisha or congregational ritual committees; Jewish clergy, chaplains and hospice workers; students in rabbinic and cantorial programs; Jewish funeral directors and cemetery managers, Jewish communal professionals, and Jewish educators. Students are not required to be Jewish, but by their application and attendance at Gamliel Institute classes, courses, functions, and events, they acknowledge and agree that the Gamliel Institute is a Jewish institution, and that the lens through which teaching is offered is Jewish. Policies regarding non-Jewish students and regarding use of Gamliel learning are appended at the end of this Bulletin.

- VIII. The Gamliel Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, origin, political views, physical conditions or limitations, or beliefs.
- A. The Gamliel Institute is dedicated to fostering knowledge and practice of Jewish practices; anyone seeking to study the practices of Judaism in regard to the continuum at the end of life is welcome to apply for admission the Gamliel Institute.
  - B. The Gamliel Institute reserves the absolute right to limit admission, or to withdraw acceptance, for any cause or reason deemed proper, at the sole discretion of the faculty and staff of the Gamliel Institute, through whatever procedures or processes shall be in effect at that time.

#### IX. Academics:

- A. Program Options
  - 1. Certificate program: This program consists of core Courses 1 through 5, including Course 3 project. See also sections D and I below.
  - 2. Individual courses: The Gamliel Institute offers other, non-core courses, some of which are open to the general public and others of which have specific prerequisites
- B. Rabbinical students may petition for credit for Gamliel courses at their schools. To date, students have received credit at:
  - 1. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
  - 2. The Aleph Ordination Program
- C. Students seeking continuing education units (CEUs) should contact their professional organizations to determine whether Gamliel courses will qualify. The Gamliel Institute may charge a fee of \$75 for handling the appropriate certification for CEUs.

1. Through the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health, HUC-JIR, for nurses, licensed clinical social workers, and marriage and family therapists. The Kalsman Institute is BBS Provider No. PCE 1746 and BRN Provider No. CEP 13038.
  2. Through the National Association of Jewish Chaplains, which provides Continuing Education reporting forms for chaplains completing the courses.
- D. Core Courses Offered, including sample topics:
- **Course 1: *Chevrah Kadisha: History, Origins, and Evolution:*** history; texts; practices; communal roles
  - **Course 2: *Chevrah Kadisha: Taharah and Shmirah:*** liturgy; training; safety; complications; autopsy; organ donation
  - **Course 3: *Chevrah Kadisha: Education, Organizing, and Training:*** leadership and community education and training
  - **Course 4: *Chevrah Kadisha: Nechamah:*** listening skills, ethical wills, remembrance, *shivah*; *bikkur cholim*; hospice; suicide
  - **Course 5: *Chevrah Kadisha: Liturgy, Ritual, and Practice:*** traditional sources; changes; role of rabbi; suicide; cremation; issues with funeral homes and funerals, cemeteries, and burial
  - **Course 6: *Chevrah Kadisha: International Perspectives:*** Examination of variations in practice around the world, centered around a study mission to New York, Prague, and Israel
- E. Prerequisites:
1. Courses 1, 2, and 5 may be taken in any order, with no prerequisite.
  2. Course 3 requires as a prerequisite successful completion of at least one other Gamliel course, with a strong preference for more than one.
  3. Course 4 requires as a prerequisite either successful completion of at least one other Gamliel course or life experience doing related work as approved by the instructors.
  4. Course 6 is open only to students who have successfully completed Courses 1 through 5.
  5. Any individual may petition for waiver of prerequisites.
- F. Course Format
1. The general minimum class size is 10; maximum is 25. The Gamliel Institute may declare other minimum and maximum class sizes for specific courses.
  2. Primary delivery method is distance learning via computer and Internet access, self-study, readings, and assignments.
- G. Course Work Expectations
1. Listen to and/or read materials provided and posted each week (English or Hebrew, with translation available)
  2. Take active part in a 90-minute “live” on-line class once a week, generally evenings at 8pm east, 7 central, 6 mountain, 5 west
  3. Complete about 3-4 hours weekly (roughly 2 hours for each in-class hour) of homework, which may include:
    - a. Reading
    - b. Viewing assigned videos or recordings
    - c. *Chevrutah* work

- d. Posting weekly in the online class forum, a collective journal that can be viewed and responded to by all members of the class, for comments, observations, and questions about learning materials and projects

#### H. Assessment

1. Faculty work with students to assess time and energy input into the course, help them develop realistic learning plans, and monitor progress on the plan.
2. All Gamliel Institute courses are offered on a Complete/Incomplete basis. Successful completion of a course requires that the student demonstrate achievement of a certain degree of mastery of the knowledge, information, and skills being taught, as evidenced by course participation and completion of assignments. Requirements for each course are available to the students by no later than the fourth week of each course.
3. Assessment of each student is done by the instructor(s) of that course, in some cases jointly with the student, and is based on the student's attendance, participation, preparedness, performance on assignments (including *chevrutah* work and forum postings), completion of a project (for Course 3, *Chevrah Kadisha* - Education, Organizing, and Training), a course-specific self-evaluation by the student, and other factors included in the outline of requirements for that course. The general 'rule of thumb' is that students are expected to attend 'live' and complete at least 75% of the classes and work assigned in each of the various categories. Below that level, the student is assessed as incomplete, and would need to make further arrangements to complete the work and demonstrate adequate mastery and effort.
4. Appeal of Assessment: A student may appeal an assessment by course instructors by submitting a letter to the Dean of Students setting forth why the student believes that the assessment is in error and including all relevant supporting information. The Dean of Students assures that all of the needed information is included, make a recommendation, and then deliver the appeal and recommendation to the Dean of the Gamliel Institute. The Institute Dean may speak to the student to ascertain additional information, at the discretion of the Institute Dean, and will then review the appeal and the recommendation, and make a final determination. The determination of the Dean of the Institute is final.

#### I. Certificate Program

Gamliel Institute *Chevrah Kadisha* Certificate: A student who has successfully completed the first five Gamliel Institute courses is granted a certificate attesting that the student has taken a comprehensive program of study in the Jewish practices and knowledge that apply during the continuum at the end of life. Students receiving a certificate from the Gamliel Institute will be asked to provide feedback to the Gamliel Institute, including suggestions on how its program might be improved.

#### J. Time to Complete

1. Gamliel Institute students are expected to complete their work in a reasonable length of time.
  - a. Course completion:
    - (i). Determination as to course completion is made immediately following the last class of the course, except for Course 3, for which the deadline for

completion of the Course project is three months after the last class.  
Instructors will notify students concerning this determination.

- (ii). Students whose work has been deemed incomplete may request to fulfill requirements for a given course by enrolling in the next offering of that course, and will be expected to fulfill the completion requirements during that next enrollment.
- (iii). If the course is still incomplete within the time frame described in parts (i) and (ii), the student will be notified that the incomplete is final.

b. Certificate Program completion:

- (i). In order to receive the Gamliel Institute *Chevrah Kadisha* Certificate, students must successfully complete all five of the core courses within a period of six years from the beginning date of the first course in which they enrolled.
- (ii). If the five courses are still incomplete in this time frame, the student will be so notified.

K. Waiver Policy and Procedure

For the Gamliel Institute *Chevrah Kadisha* Certificate, at least four of the five courses must be taken through the Gamliel Institute (as a “resident” student.) If a student has alternative experience, training, or study that the student believes to be the equivalent of successful completion of a specific Gamliel Institute course, the student may apply for a waiver (to place out) of that course, based on the following procedure:

1. The student shall submit:

- A narrative explanation of why the alternative experience, training, or study is an applicable substitute for the specific course.
- A direct side-by-side comparison of the contents of that course (as described in the outline offered by the Gamliel Institute) with the experience, training, or study that is being submitted as a substitution. This comparison shall address each module and submodule in the course outline, including: readings; material presented; lectures and discussions; texts presented; videos; audio recordings; projects assigned or undertaken; *chevrutah* discussions; forum postings; and assignments.
- Any evaluations received of the work done elsewhere (grades/transcripts, reviews, commendations, publications, patents, or other documentation of the value and quality of the work).
- Any work product or projects previously completed that are to be considered as part of the request for waiver.
- Anything else that the student feels would be persuasive, informative, or helpful in demonstrating the equivalence of the experience, training, or study to the content of the Gamliel Institute course.

2. The Dean of Students shall assess the completeness of the request, and when the request is deemed complete shall ask for a review and recommendation from Institute faculty. The instructors selected for the review and recommendation shall be at the discretion of the Dean of Students. When possible, they shall be either the instructors who taught that course the last time it was offered, if they are available, or the instructors who will be teaching that course the next time it is offered, if that is known. If none of those instructors shall be available, the Dean

of Students shall have discretion to ask for a review and recommendation from any instructor or instructors, or any person associated in any capacity with the Gamliel Institute who is qualified to review the work product.

3. The recommendation of the Dean of Students and accompanying documentation shall be submitted to the Dean of the Gamliel Institute for a determination. The decision of the Dean of the Institute shall be final.
- L. Computer and technology requirements. Students need to have sufficient technology available to be able to:
  1. Access on-line materials
  2. Participate in on-line classes, including web-cam and voice access
  3. Run appropriate software at an adequate speed

M. Student Submittals for Admission

1. A personal up-to-date photograph in digital form is requested for web site posting and blog postings.
2. A biography, detailing their interest in this topic as well as any relevant academic and personal background.
3. Agreement to keep confidential all materials shared by other students.
4. Agreement that all materials posted in the forum online or submitted to the instructors are given to the Gamliel Institute with the right to share and display for educational, non-commercial purposes, and for publicity concerning Gamliel Institute offerings, and may be placed in the public domain with appropriate attribution, for access at no cost by the public.

X. Administrative Structure

A. Admissions

1. Students have access to an institute academic calendar listing registration deadlines, last day to drop, holidays, course dates and makeup class dates.
2. The Application for Admission is on the Gamliel Institute web page – <http://www.jewish-funerals.org/gamliel-institute> – as well as in print.
3. The Gamliel Institute is currently not accredited, but accreditation is part of the plan, if a suitable institution and a reasonable fee can be arranged. The Gamliel Institute makes no assertions or claims with regard to accreditation or acceptance of its certificates or educational program by others.
4. Process of admission
  - a. Requirements for students: interest in program, demonstrated experience in a related area. Undergraduate degree is not required but is helpful.
  - b. Two letters of reference that show qualifications for taking the course.
  - c. Some basic knowledge of standard Jewish practices and common vocabulary is helpful.
  - d. Students are expected to be able to “decode” Hebrew, to recognize Hebrew letters and vowels, to learn basic root words, and to understand the context in which they are being used. Hebrew fluency is not a prerequisite.

B. Tuition Policies

1. All financial issues are handled by the Institute’s Executive Director.

2. The standard course fee for Courses 1 through 5 is \$500 per class (at this time). This amount may be changed at any time without prior notice.
3. Payment of course fees must be received no later than the start of the first class of that course scheduled class start unless other arrangements are made.
4. Payment may be made by credit card, on-line, or by check. Receipts are issued on request.
5. Discounts:
  - a. Group Rate: If three (3) or more students from a given organization or institution (such as a synagogue or Chevrah Kadisha, with a group usually indicated by combined payment of tuition and fees for all of the students in the group through the organization or institution) enroll for a given course, those students will each receive a 20% discount for tuition
  - b. Clergy Rate: Students enrolled in an accredited program to become a rabbi or cantor [and those students identified as holding one of these titles conferred by an educational institution or other training organization, recognized by the Gamliel Institute] will receive a 50% discount (resulting in full tuition at the rate of \$250 for each of the core Gamliel Institute courses).
  - c. Scholarships: Students for whom the full tuition of \$500 presents a financial difficulty may apply for a scholarship. Scholarships are awarded based on merit and availability of funds, solely at the discretion of the Gamliel Institute.
6. Donations: Because tuition does not usually fully cover the cost of offering courses, students (and organizations or institutions) who are able to do so are strongly encouraged to make a contribution to the Gamliel Institute by paying an amount above and beyond the full (or discounted) tuition for students, in order to support our scholarship program for students with financial needs.
7. Cancellation policy: The Gamliel Institute reserves the right to cancel a course if enrollment is insufficient to support the course financially. In such a case, any tuition already paid for that course session will be refunded on request. [If a refund is not requested, the amount will be credited for the student's next class.]
8. After a student registers and pays, and once the class has begun, there will be no refunds (unless the course is cancelled by the Gamliel Institute). If a student is unable to complete a given course, he/she may re-enroll, at no additional charge, the next time that course is offered, in order to complete the course (see section IX, I).
9. Taste of Gamliel: Students wishing to try out the Gamliel Institute may enroll in "Taste of Gamliel" – a series of individual, one-evening seminars – which are priced at a nominal fee, determined each year.
10. Course 6: Course 6 is a combined course/study mission, designed to involve travel and learning in New York, Prague, and Israel. Course 6 was first offered in spring 2015, and entailed six on-line classes (three before travel, three after) coupled with an 18-day study mission. Course 6 is open to students who have completed Courses 1 through 5, and is currently scheduled to be offered in spring 2018. Students will be responsible for direct, per-person costs (e.g., travel, lodging, meals), which can be paid either directly by the student or in combination with fundraising efforts by the student. Direct costs for the next trip are expected to be roughly \$7,000-10,000.

C. Scholarships

1. Student scholarship funds are actively solicited and made available.
2. Staff will ask students to assist in strategizing opportunities for local scholarships and fundraising opportunities.

XI. Staff: Gamliel Institute key staff includes the following, including responsibilities as shown:

A. Academic Dean of the Gamliel Institute

1. Oversees the Institute
2. Coordinates course development and insures appropriate content
  - a. Course Developer
  - b. Course Editor
3. Hires and supervises teaching faculty.
4. Recruits and advises students and monitors their performance
5. Supervises grant writers
6. Supervises Seminary Relationship Development

B. Executive Director

1. Provides administrative assistance
2. Handles finances, including student tuition receipts and teacher payments
3. Provides non-financial record keeping regarding teachers and students
4. Supervises other administrative staff
  - a. Educational Technologist
  - b. Technical Concierge
    - (i). Insures in advance that each student has the hardware and knowledge to utilize the course technology
    - (ii). Provides technical assistance during the course
  - c. Registrar

C. Dean of Students

1. Works with Administrative Dean on student recruitment
2. Works with Administrative Dean and other faculty on student project mentoring

D. Administrative Dean

1. Student Recruitment – Works with Student Dean to develop and execute plan to market courses and recruit students.
2. Course logistics – Coordinates logistics class for each course.
3. Student Information – Develops and maintains a contact database and bio information for all Gamliel students.
4. Student evaluation – Oversees the development of a methodology to evaluate student performance including class attendance, class participation, readings done, and forum posts.
5. Course Input – Works with Dean and Executive Director to input new course content into ATutor.
6. Class Recordings Management - Manages recordings archive including developing table of contents.
7. Student Projects – Standardizes format and style to include title page, introduction, table of contents, executive summary of students' Course 3 projects.

Works with Communications Liaison to create a front-page table of contents and post projects to the website.

- E. Communications Liaison
  - 1. Media outreach through
    - a. Brochure development and graphics
    - b. Website maintenance and development
    - c. Social media and communications strategy and use
    - d. Other media and methods as appropriate
  - 2. Works with Administrative Dean on uploading and displaying Student Projects
- F. Institute Associate
  - 1. Special Projects
  - 2. Taste of Gamliel coordinator
- G. Teachers/Instructors
  - 1. Multiple factors are used to select the most appropriate teachers
    - a. Credentials: MA/PhD or equivalent; Rabbi; teaching experience
    - b. Experiential background in CK, cemetery management, funeral home,
    - c. Ability to work with the technology of distance learning
    - d. Comfort of interaction with students
    - e. Academic integrity
    - f. Available time to oversee/critique all written modules (this is a part-time engagement for most faculty); assurances from faculty of their timely presence
    - g. Ongoing availability
  - 2. Work with the course materials to structure the class
    - a. Insure appropriate use of audios and visuals; development of videos, power point presentations
    - b. Insure appropriate on-line work, homework
    - c. Provide students attention and feedback
    - d. Utilize technology to its fullest
  - 3. Work with students
    - a. Review practical information (how-to) for students about postings, journaling, methodologies available on-line.
    - b. Insure that students know about assigned texts, supplementary readings, and on-line materials.
    - c. Assess and evaluate the student's course accomplishments at the end of the course. Assign either Complete or Incomplete for the course.
- H. Administrative Staff
  - 1. Executive Assistant(s)
  - 2. Administrative Assistant(s)
  - 3. Secretarial: Corresponding, Recording, Recordkeeping, Communications
  - 4. Media Staff: Social media maintenance
  - 5. Librarian/Research Staff

## XII. Course Schedule (See IX, D for brief description of courses.)

Our current schedule calls for Course 6 to be offered once every three years. The course schedule is designed so that students can complete the program of core courses (Courses 1-

5) within a two-year period, in a manner that allows them to have sufficient planning time for participation in the next offering of Course 6. Toward that end:

- \* Course 1, 2, and 5 are each offered twice within each 3-year cycle between offerings of Course 6.
- \* Courses 3 and 4 are each offered once within each 3-year cycle between offerings of Course 6.
- \* Course 3, which requires the completion of a substantial project, is scheduled to begin approximately two years prior to Course 6, so that students will know sufficiently far in advance of Course 6 whether they will be eligible for that course.

These principles allow a student to begin with either of the introductory courses (1 or 2) and finish the core program within two years. In special circumstances, it may be possible for a student who has taken at least two other courses to arrange to take Course 3 as independent study in order to complete the core program in time to take Course 6.

The current schedule is posted on the website and is subject to change based on enrollments and other factors.

## POLICY ON NON-JEWISH STUDENTS

It is gratifying to know that some in the non-Jewish community are interested in studying with us and learning about Jewish traditions. Our courses are designed to be academically rigorous, and open to all. At the same time, the mission of the Institute is to train Jewish Chevrah Kadisha leaders, and to promote the goal of having Chevrah Kadisha groups in every synagogue and community.

Gamliel Institute policy in this regard is as follows:

1. Each of courses 1 through 5 is open to enrollment by anyone who meets the prerequisites, subject to the approval of the faculty and administration of the Gamliel Institute.
2. A student who successfully completes Courses 1 through 5 is eligible for an appropriately worded certificate from the Institute.
3. Acceptance to Course 6 is at the sole discretion of the Gamliel Institute.

We also request of our students who may be adapting Jewish traditions for use in a non-Jewish setting, that they acknowledge that their practice is not Jewish, but is derived from Jewish tradition, and that, to clarify this distinction, they use alternative terminology in the non-Jewish context. For example:

<b>Hebrew term</b>	<b>Suggested alternative term</b>
<i>aron</i>	casket
<i>Chevrah Kadisha</i>	Final Kindness team
<i>halanah</i>	casketing
<i>halbashah</i>	dressings
<i>mechilah</i>	asking the deceased for forgiveness
<i>meit/meitah</i>	the deceased
<i>metaharim</i>	Final Kindness team members

<i>neshamah</i>	soul
<i>rechitzah</i>	physical washing
<i>rosh/roshah</i>	Final Kindness team leader
<i>tachrichim</i>	burial clothes
<i>taharah</i>	Final Kindness
<i>taharah</i>	spiritual washing
Adonai	God

## POLICY ON USE OF GAMLIEL INSTITUTE MATERIAL

As the words and actions of Gamliel students may reflect on the Institute and those associated with it, students are expected to follow these guidelines:

1. In their writing and teaching that flows from Gamliel Institute learning, they will acknowledge that they have been students of the Gamliel Institute.
2. If they are not recognized as Jewish by normative Jewish standards, they will not represent themselves as Jewish.
3. In teaching material learned at the Gamliel Institute, they will acknowledge the importance of not using this knowledge to help non-Jews proselytize to Jews, or to delegitimize or undermine Judaism, or any group within normative Judaism.
4. They will consult with and accept guidance from the Gamliel Institute Deans if any parts of this agreement are unclear.
5. They acknowledge that materials developed by the Gamliel Institute, including its ATutor coursework, are copyrighted and are the property of the Institute.