

Gamliel Institute Core Curriculum Course 1: *Chevrah Kadisha*: Origins and Evolution



"Digging the Grave" The Cycle of Paintings of the Prague Burial Society (1772)

[Register Now!](#)

Tuesdays, **September 1st – November 17th, 2020** 8:00 pm EST/5:00 pm PST
(Twelve 90-minute classes)

Instructors: Rick Light, David Zinner, Susan Barnes, Holly Blue Hawkins,

Have you ever wondered why Jews devote so much attention to their dead, or how our death-care practices developed? This course is an illuminating exploration to find answers to such questions. Journey with us into intriguing visions of ancient, medieval, and more modern times, glimpsing past understandings, times and characters all contributing to what our tradition has become. Come learn with us, share your wisdom, and delve into the hidden events of the past that shaped our present and possibly our future.

This course traces the evolution of *Chevrah Kadisha* practice and the *chevrah's* role in the community from our earliest recorded accounts through the standardization of practices during Medieval times with the advent of printing, all the way through the changes that were the result of Jewish migration to the Western Hemisphere, up to and including contemporary global events. The readings include articles written especially for this course as well as many curated from traditional sources. They emphasize historical context, sociology, politics, government, and other factors, reveal how the *chevrah* has changed over time. This course explores the ways in which we continue to evolve through this coronavirus pandemic, which is transforming and informing all aspects of *chevrah* work.

Understanding the history and development of the *Chevrah Kadisha*, enables those involved in this holy work to deepen and enliven both their work and the sense of wonder into which our tradition so elegantly opens a portal. Students will emerge better able to educate the larger Jewish community in why our involvement in life-death transition is so critical to the psychospiritual health of our people, how it came to be one of the foundational pillars of Jewish communal life, and how the richness and depth of the liturgy supports our rituals and practices and has the capacity to evolve to meet the challenges of our times within the robust container of our millennia-old tradition. Everyone who participates in the sacred work of the *chevrah* is encouraged to take this course.

For more information: info@Jewish-Funerals.org or 410-733-3700