



Overview

The Katz School's entry-level Occupational Therapy Doctorate, the first fully accredited entry-level OT doctoral program in the New York metropolitan area, trains caring and competent scholar-practitioners to develop and deliver holistic services through the integration of theory, research and knowledge-based practice and clinical skills.

Mission

The mission of YU Occupational Therapy Doctorate program is to educate and train students to become scholar-practitioners who are caring and competent in developing and delivering services, through the integration of theory, research, and practice of clinical skills.

Faculty

*Yeshiva University is pleased to welcome Gioia Ciani, OTD, OTR/L as Program Director.

*Dr. Mindy Garfinkel, OTD, OTR/L, ATP will continue as the Assistant Program Director. Dr. Garfinkel, is an occupational therapy practitioner with more than 30 years of experience, twenty of which have been in the field of pediatrics and school-based practice, and 10 in the area of adult rehabilitation. She is certified as an assistive technology professional (ATP) through the Rehabilitation and Engineering Society of North America (RESNA).

Dr. Garfinkel holds a post-professional doctorate in occupational therapy from

Quinnipiac University, a Master of Arts in occupational therapy from New York University, and a Bachelor of Arts in communications from the City University of New York, Flushing.

*In February 2024, the OTD Program welcomed its Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, Terrie Ludwig, OTD, OTR/L ASDCS. Dr. Ludwig has been an occupational therapist with over 29 years of experience. Dr. Ludwig holds a post professional doctorate in occupational therapy from Eastern Kentucky University, a Master of Science in occupational therapy from SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn, and a Bachelor of Science in education with a math concentration from LIU@ C.W. Post.

*Melanie Evangelista, a clinical assistant professor at Yeshiva University, as well as an adjunct instructor and capstone mentor for doctoral students in the occupational therapy program at the New York Institute of Technology.

In addition, she is a per-diem occupational therapist in an acute rehab at Mercy Medical Center (CHSLI), where she evaluates and treats patients with a wide range of diagnoses, including neurological, orthopedic, cardiac, and post-operative conditions.

Professor Evangelista is a candidate for a Ph.D. in gerontology from Concordia University and holds a master's degree in occupational therapy and bachelor's degree in life science from the New York Institute of Technology.

*Dr. Lisa Gordon-Handler, is an associate clinical professor, was a full-time associate

professor at Long Island University prior to joining the Katz School. The focus of her research is in identifying a unique student profile that describes learner characteristics and competencies and in the interface between learner characteristics (self-awareness and metacognitive skill) for academic, clinical and professional development.

Dr. Gordon-Handler holds a Ph.D. in organizational psychology from North Central University and an M.A. in occupational therapy from USC.

* Dr. Alex Laghezza is the Coordinator of Doctoral Capstones and a clinical assistant professor. She has worked primarily with older adults, and has expertise in disability studies, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, occupational justice, and aging. She previously taught occupational therapy at Stony Brook University where she integrated the field of disability studies and principles of occupational justice.

Her research focuses on the experiences of older adults with cognitive changes who are aging in place.

Dr. Laghezza holds a master of science degree in occupational therapy from Utica College and a Ph.D. from Stony Brook University.

*Dr. Amiya Waldman-Levi is clinical associate professor. Dr. Waldman-Levi received her undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate in Occupational Therapy from the Hebrew University, and completed two postdoctoral pieces of training. Prior to joining Yeshiva University, Dr. Waldman-Levi held multiple academic appointments at Mercy College School of Health and Natural Studies, at the Occupational Therapy Department, Long Island University, and at the School of Occupational Therapy, The Hebrew

University, Israel. Dr. Waldman-Levi continues to foster her national and international, professional, and inter-professional collaborations she developed over the years.

Dr. Waldman-Levi completed Postdoctoral training, The School of Health and Natural Studies, Mercy College and The New School of Social Research, Clinical Psychology Department, the Center for Attachment Research. She holds a PhD from the School of Occupational Therapy, Hebrew University, Israel; a M.Sc., OT, School of Occupational Therapy, Hebrew University, Israel BOT, School of Occupational Therapy, The Hebrew University, Israel

*Professor Sara Scott, Director Sara Schenirer Program. Sara Scott has a master's in OT from Downstate Medical Center. She has over 18 years of experience in the field. Her area of practice is concentrated in school-based therapy with an emphasis on school-based evaluations. She served as a fieldwork coordinator and instructor at Eastwick college for 10.5 years before she joined YU Katz as an adjunct fieldwork coordinator and the coordinator for the Sara Schenirer OT program.

We are so excited about the partnership between Katz and Sara Schenirer. The Katz school prides itself on adhering to cultural sensitivities of its diverse student population and the Katz/SS partnership is certainly a testament to it.

The first sara Schenirer cohort began January 2024 and this partnership is off to an amazing start! Thank you to Dr. Mindy Garfinkel for spearheading this collaboration.

Accreditation Note