

University

# Workshop focuses on Judaism

By Alice Thornton  
Emerald Reporter

Dr. Jerry Diller conducted a workshop Wednesday on the problems of being Jewish as part of Jewish Cultural Awareness Week.

Diller, a psychologist who specializes in problems of ethnic identity, has performed clinical work that focuses on the difficulties of being Jewish and growing up Jewish.

"It's not unusual for people who are born Jewish to reach a point in their lives where they confront conflict with their Jewish identity," Diller said. "Many have welcomed the opportunity to talk about it."

Diller conducted a study ten years ago by interviewing Jewish college students who were feeling alienated by their Jewish heritage. He said there was an enormous consistency of responses that are similar to those felt by many young Jews today.

Diller said about 75 percent of students interviewed felt ambivalent about their Jewish identity. He said as few as 15 percent see Judaism as a meaningful aspect of their lives.

"People said that as they were growing up, Judaism became a source of conflict with their parents," Diller said.

"The struggle for independence from their parents often focused around being Jewish."

Diller attributed many of the negative feelings to "the watered-down Judaism of the suburbs," which he said is based on too many rules and a removal of the spiritual values of Judaism.

"They basically find it impossible to relate to the spiritu-

ality of being Jewish," Diller said. Ethnotherapist Judith Klein narrated the video which was compiled from therapy sessions with her own patients.

Ethnotherapy is a type of group therapy that studies the conscious and unconscious ways people deal with their ethnic heritage.

Klein said ethnotherapy groups that meet for sessions of

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Diller presented a video, "Ethnotherapy With Jews," to show the process by which Jews may come to terms with

up to ten weeks experience an increase in positive attitudes toward Jewishness. The increased awareness allows people to become more committed to their Jewish identity.



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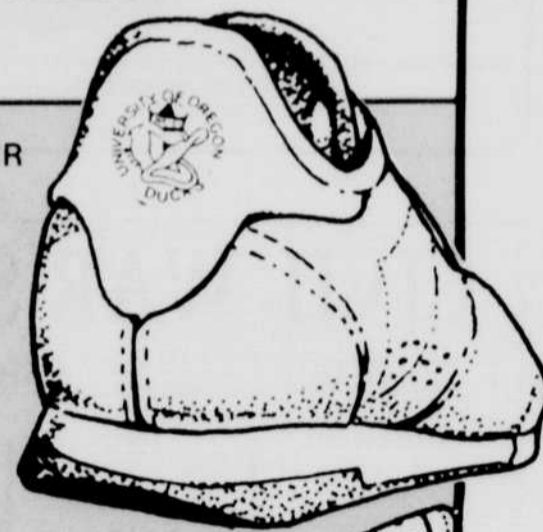

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