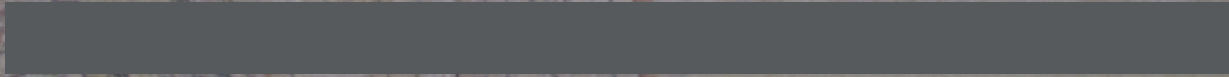




# Program in Jewish Culture & Society



2018-2019 Newsletter

# Director's Letter

Dear Friends,

This year has demonstrated the vibrancy of the Program in Jewish Culture & Society and the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies (HGMS). We hosted two film series, many cultural events, lectures, and book launches, a graduate student conference in HGMS, and a junior scholar's conference in Russian and East European cultures. We enjoyed working with Hillel on the Faculty Shabbat series, a program on Kristallnacht, a film screening and discussion with Israeli author Dorit Rabinyan and other events. On average we held an event per week—sometimes more. All of these wonderful programs are made possible by our supporters and we are so grateful to you for making this program sing! Among the highlights of the year were an extraordinarily energetic visit from Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn—thanks to the generosity of the Krouse family—and a beautiful, moving concert by Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell—thanks to MillerComm and many other programs across campus. We are delighted that three of our Jewish Studies Minors or Majors, all recipients of the Filler Award, will be using their educations in Jewish Studies to pursue careers in various fields associated with Jewish life and learning. We are so grateful to the Gendell and Shiner families for supporting graduate education and we salute Ethan Madarieta and LeiAnna Xenia Hamel for being awarded the Gendell Family and Shiner Family Fellowship. We are so proud of Jessica Young, an active HGMS graduate student, for securing a tenure track position at New College of Florida as an Assistant Professor of Global English. We are very sorry to see Sara Feldman go but we are thrilled that she will be a preceptor of Yiddish at Harvard. We look forward to welcoming Dr. Pnina Motzafi-Haller and Rabbi Efrat Rotem—see within for the full stories.

Our Jewish Studies workshop series and the newly launched Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies faculty series allowed for local and visiting scholars to discuss ideas in small group settings that fostered profound discussions. Many of these workshops were paired with evening lectures that brought together community members, students, and faculty to learn and share ideas. We were delighted to host six book launches that showcased some of the publications of our brilliant and prolific faculty, and we look forward to learning about Associate Director Dana Rabin's new book, *Britain and its Internal Others*, in September.

One major accomplishment this year was the setting up of our new website: <https://jewishculture.illinois.edu/>. Sarah Elder, the Jewish Studies Office Support Specialist, worked tirelessly to transfer the old website (seriously outdated) to this new one. I am so grateful to Nate Baxley and Brad Petersen for their advice and work on the new site as well. In the fall, on Sarah's initiative, we launched a new weekly electronic newsletter. Overall, the audience for our events has been dramatically increasing; we have been at or near capacity this year at the majority of our happenings. About 130 people came to hear Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn at Krannert and nearly 200 filled the beautiful Knight Auditorium at Spurlock for Anthony Russell.

We teach almost 1000 students each semester in our combined courses, many of our faculty are consistently listed on the Incomplete List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent, and Dana Rabin was awarded the Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching last year. Our courses run the gamut from traditional to experimental and include: Jewish Cultures of the World, The Bible as Literature, Soviet Jewish History, Jews in the Diaspora, History of Antisemitism, Jewish Life Writing, Introduction to Holocaust, Genocide, Memory Studies, Jewish Sacred Literature, Readings in Rabbinic Midrash, Russian-Jewish Culture, and Jewish American and U.S. Minority Literatures in Dialogue. The range and diversity of these and other classes strengthen our program.

Among the exciting events we have coming up in the 2018-2019 year is a writers series entitled "21st Century Jewish Writing and the World." Co-organized with Gordon Hutner, director of the Trowbridge Initiative in American Cultures, we have invited four prominent Jewish writers to campus—each will give a talk/reading and the series will culminate in a one-day symposium featuring scholars of Jewish literature who can discuss these and other cutting-edge writers. Each of the novelists connects classic Jewish themes (including alienation and the endless quest for identity) with a sense of the global character of this writing; the places in the novels range from Israel to New York to the USSR and beyond and reach audiences well beyond Jewish literature. For the first time we have also organized a joint Chicago and UIUC campus series—each writer will present on campus and in diverse locations across Chicago. This was at the suggestion of our wonderfully supportive Jewish Studies Advisory Council and we are thrilled with how the series has shaped up. Lorelei Rosenthal and Scott Gendell were particularly helpful in setting up the Chicago series, so a hearty thank you to them! We will also continue to hold Jewish Studies and HGMS workshops and host a range of lectures, book launches, film series, and conferences. The 2nd annual HGMS graduate student conference is set to take place on March 1 and we hope to again bring together a diverse collection of graduate students to debate pressing issues in the field.

As many of you know, my term as Director of Jewish Studies ends in August—I will continue to direct the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies and I am very enthusiastic about all of our upcoming initiatives and events. I am utterly delighted that Dara Goldman, Associate Professor of Spanish, will become Director of Jewish Studies as of 16 August, 2018. Dara has been on the Jewish Studies Executive Committee for many years and has been a very active member of the program. She and her husband, Itai Segev, frequently visit Chicago and have participated in many of the Program's Chicago events and are actively involved in the UIUC Hillel. Her new work includes an examination of the Jews of Cuba and she has published *Out of Bounds: Islands and the Demarcation of Identity in the Hispanic Caribbean* and many articles and book chapters. Dara formerly served as the director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and has numerous affiliations including with Comparative Literature, Gender and Women's Studies, The Unit for Criticism, and Latina/Latino Studies. I am extremely happy about this choice of future director as Dara cares very deeply about the Program and will be an excellent leader as we continue our efforts to expand our undergraduate minors and majors, continue to offer stellar campus and Chicago-area programs, and as we continue to reach out to communities here and across the country. Dara is just a lovely person on top of all of her accomplishments, and I offer her hearty congratulations on this new role.

It has been a great honor to lead the Program and I am very proud of our students and exhilarated that so many stunning visitors have or will be here on campus and/or in Chicago. I hope that you will be able to join us at our rewarding events during the 2018-2019 year and I look forward to seeing you all through my work in HGMS.

A huge thank you to Sarah Elder for designing the newsletter and Cecile Steinberg for—once again—volunteering to copy edit.

All best, Brett

# Filler Award Winners and Jewish Studies Majors/Minors Aria Tsoulouhas, Joshua Altshuler, and Meirav Malter All Continuing in Various Jewish Studies



Aria Tsoulouhas

I will be attending Yale Divinity School this fall to study Second-Temple Judaism, an opportunity for which I am infinitely grateful. My majors in Jewish Studies and Classics made this a natural decision, burgeoned by the excellent professors and invaluable experiences I have had at the U of I. I look forward to the future, and most of all to refining my language skills and research interests under the guidance of giants in the field.

[Filler Award](#) winner and Jewish Studies Minor Joshua Altshuler is graduating (congratulations!!!) and will be joining the Institute for Southern Jewish Life. Here is what Joshua says:

As an Education Fellow for the Institute for Southern Jewish Life, I will be traveling to synagogues throughout the south to develop social programming, advance ritual life, and implement the organization's educational curriculum. ISJL Fellows are offered the valuable opportunity to intimately shape how communities, particularly children and young adults, practice and find meaning in their Jewish identity.



Joshua Altschuler

I will be making Aliyah (moving to Israel) this summer (2018) and pursuing my Masters degree in government with a concentration in diplomacy and conflict studies at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), in Herzliya. I am excited to continue learning about the complexities of the Middle East from expert faculty at the IDC and from leading practitioners in the field. I will also begin working as an intelligence analyst for MAX Security Solutions in Tel Aviv. I will produce research reports on current events and geopolitical developments across the Middle East for business clients that have business activities in the region. My experience at UIUC and studying abroad at Tel Aviv University have prepared me well for these next challenges and for starting my career in Israel.



Meirav with Ron Filler and  
Brett Kaplan at the Filler  
Award Ceremony

# Gendell Family and Shiner Family Fund Award Winners

I am utterly delighted to announce the two recipients of the Gendell Family and Shiner Family Fellowship this year!

**LeiAnna Hamel** - "Wayward Women: Deviant Female Sexuality in Russian and Yiddish Literatures, 1870-1930"

**Ethan Madarieta** - "Creative Resistance and Performances of Memory: Latin America in the Era of Neoliberalism"

We are so grateful to the Gendell and Shiner families for this fellowship which is so important to our students—especially now when block grants that support many students have been cut by as much as 90% in some departments. These are very tough times for our students and this fellowship changes their careers in very positive ways. Thank you!

**Alli Schwartz** has just graduated from the University of Illinois this past May with a major in Social Work and a minor in Jewish Studies. This coming fall, she will be attending Washington University in St. Louis for a Masters in Social Work with a concentration in Children, Youth and Families and a Policy specialization.



## Ellie Spitz nominated for LAS Outstanding Young Alumni Award



Ellie graduated with a minor in Jewish Studies in 2011, went on to earn an MSW, and has been with the Chicago-based, vision-driven Jewish group Mishkan for three and a half years.

It was through minoring in Jewish Studies that Ellie learned about the full, broad, rich history of Jews and Judaism. Until she took a course on the Jews of Spain, she told Brett Kaplan, she had not yet fully appreciated the global nature of Jewish history and culture. Through our program, she learned about Jews in Israel, in Spain, in America, in many places in the world. She also began learning Hebrew and discovered how hard it is to master fully! Through her work at Mishkan, Ellie uses the depth of knowledge acquired here and the Hebrew she began learning; she connects with many in the Mishkan community who feel that they ("learned" in air quotes)

Hebrew in Sunday school and struggle to learn it more fully as adults.

Mishkan seeks to build Jewish community through holding shabbat and high holy day services and fostering social justice through organizing for refugees and providing other services. A new and important aspect of Mishkan that Ellie spearheaded is the Wellness Center. Ellie has worked with many vibrant programs at Mishkan and now devotes about half of her time to the Wellness Center. This Center helps people who turn to religion for help with mental health issues by being a place that can make connections between people in need of help and Rabbis or other religious leaders as well as mental health experts such as therapists and counselors. This outstanding leadership role directly improves the lives of people suffering from mental illness of all kinds and gets to the core of Mishkan's values.

# Advisory Council Chair Doug Hoffman Reflects on the Benefits of Supporting the Program

At the end of my sophomore year in Champaign-Urbana it was time to pick a major. I was trying to decide between Philosophy and Religious Studies. Despite the fact that there were almost no courses on Judaism, I was truly more interested in studying Religion. Therefore, I first visited the Director of the Program in Religious Studies, Professor William Schoedel. He informed me that a new faculty member would be joining the Program that fall to teach Judaics—a newly minted Ph.D. from Brown University named Gary Porton. With that news, I had no need to visit the Philosophy Department.

Over my last 2 years at Illinois my course of study consisted almost entirely of Religious Studies courses. As hoped, I learned much about Judaism from critical study of the Old Testament in English and Hebrew, reading Rabbinic literature and studying Jewish history. I broadened my appreciation of Judaism and Christianity by studying the New Testament and early Church history, not something I had any way of doing before college. It was exactly the mind expanding liberal education I had hoped for in my university experience.

After my undergraduate time, I was able to maintain and expand my friendship with Professor Porton. Through this connection I was always well informed regarding the Program in Religious Studies and the prospect for Jewish studies on campus. While I was pleased about the friendship, I had a bit of sadness over the fact that Gary Porton was the one and only professor teaching Judaics. That is until Michael Shapiro and Gary Porton launched the Committee in Jewish Culture and Society in 1981. With the creation of the Committee, later the Program, there was a way for students to easily have a view of the breadth of Jewish Studies classes, and more classes were created. This meant that even if a student did not want to be a Jewish Studies major, it would be easy for all students to find a Jewish related field. ([2017-18 Newsletter, p.9](#))

I have no doubt that every Jewish student who has ever taken any course in Jewish Studies has learned and grown, in knowledge and a broadened perspective. Jewish students are fortunate that the

Program exists, giving them many classes from which to choose. At the same time, it is a good thing that these exact same classes are available for non-Jews. Students of all religions benefit from studying Judaism, Christianity, Islam or any religion at this or any other public university.

It is my pleasure to support the Program in Jewish Culture & Society for the benefit of all students at the University of Illinois. The program is a benefit to Jewish students looking to learn more about their religion. Hopefully, Jewish students will find themselves sitting in class and studying Jewish subjects side by side with non-Jews. What greater purpose could there be for a public university than to teach students critically about their religions and the faiths of others.

Doug Hoffman graduated from the (then) Program in Religious Studies in 1975. He has been a student of Gary Porton since 1973. In 1975 Doug was accepted to graduate school in Religious Studies but deferred admission and by chance began working at the

Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE) intending to save money for grad school, but he ended up staying.

At the CBOE he had successful careers as a self employed market maker and then as a senior employee of the exchange. Doug is the chair of the Advisory Council of the Illinois Program in Jewish Culture & Society, a member of the Board of Overseers for the Cincinnati campus of HUC-JIR and a Trustee of Beth Emet the Free Synagogue in Evanston, Illinois.



Gary Porton and Doug Hoffman

# Remembering Larry Sherman

By Doug Hoffman

Longtime Advisory Council member and stalwart of the Chicago Jewish community, Lawrence “Larry” Sherman was born on September 13, 1930, at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago, just one of the many Jewish organizations that Larry loved and supported. For many years Larry was Chair of the Board of Directors of Mt. Sinai and later a Life Director.

Larry was proud to have graduated from Austin High School on the west side of Chicago, the University of Illinois in 1952 (Business) and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Larry and his late wife Elaine had four children, Roger, Stephanie, Bruce and Carolyn.

Because Larry’s love of the University of Illinois was already known, in approximately 1997 when the Advisory Council was formed, Larry became a charter member of the Council. He participated in the Advisory Council and supported the program continuously until his death. Larry led an emergency campaign to raise funds for the program at a crucial juncture in its history and the program will always be very grateful to him for this mitzvah.

In addition to the Program, Larry was active in many institutions of Reform Jewish Life. He served as the Chair of the Board of Governors of the Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute and was a member of the Board at the time of his death. He was Vice Chair and member of the Board of Overseers of Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. He was a longtime member and officer of North Shore Congregation Israel.

In addition to his charitable work in the Jewish community, Larry was active in a couple of businesses. In 1958, Larry founded Puritan Finance Corporation in Chicago. While living in the north suburbs, for decades Larry made and distributed

hundreds of bottles of Sherman Garden’s Kosher for Passover Beet Horseradish. His two daughters have both followed him into horseradish, both have business



selling horseradish, in retail stores and on the internet. <https://www.wnyc.org/story/265082-last-chance-foods-family-tradition-built-horseradish/>

There was one way in which Larry held a totally unique role among all the members of the Advisory Council. Unlike anyone else on the council, Larry recruited new members, often younger members, to the Advisory Council. No one else brought as many new members to the Council as Larry.

Words from Pirke Avot (1:6) describe how many of us thought of Larry and what our relationship with him meant. “Make for yourself a mentor, acquire for yourself a friend and judge every person as meritorious.” By his kind heart and his example of charity and community service, Larry was a model for all who knew him.

# Sara Feldman Goes to Harvard



We wish Sara Feldman all the best as she takes up her position as Preceptor of Yiddish at Harvard. During her three years at Illinois as the Yiddish and Hebrew instructor, Sara not only taught wonderful classes but also

fostered Klezmer and Yiddish at Illinois by encouraging us to invite stellar artists such as Psoy Korolenko, Daniel Kahn, and Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell. Sara earned her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan's Near Eastern Studies department in 2014 and her award winning dissertation was entitled "Fine Lines: Hebrew and Yiddish Translations of Alexander Pushkin's Verse Novel *Eugene Onegin*." She is the author of an impressive number of peer reviewed articles in major journals and held one of the most prestigious and competitive postdoctoral fellowships in the country, the Fraenkel Center Fellowship (at the University of Michigan). Her work spans both Hebrew and Yiddish literature, a rare achievement. Sara offered a Jewish Studies workshop in November of 2017 about her book project—a significantly revised version of her dissertation currently entitled "People of the Russian Book: Alexander Pushkin in Modern Jewish Culture."

An engaged audience of faculty and graduate students found the project very compelling and offered helpful directions as she works on the final version. The book takes an interesting and previously uncharted direction by locating a common non-Westernness in Jewishness and certain strands of Russianness within the pale of settlement. By bringing out this connection through the central figure of Pushkin her project has the potential to re-write trajectories of influence and to shed new light on the relationship—in both literary and historical terms—between Jewishness and Russianness. It has been wonderful to have Sara as part of the program. Not only is she an exceptionally strong scholar and teacher, but she is also a stellar campus community member who engages with and contributes to all of our many events and plans. We will miss her and wish her well at Harvard!

## Welcome Dr. Pnina Motzafi-Haller

The Program in Jewish Culture & Society is delighted to welcome Dr. Pnina Motzafi-Haller to campus in the fall! Professor Motzafi-Haller will be teaching Anthropology 290, Jewish Cultures of the World, and we look forward to having her as part of our community.

Pnina Motzafi-Haller is Associate Professor of Anthropology from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel (Ph.D Brandeis University 1988). Her research interests sent her to Africa, India, and Israel. She continued her three-

decades-long ethnographic research in Botswana. Between 2007-2013 she worked in Rajasthan, India documenting the lives of Banjara post-nomadic people. Since 1995, her work focused on Israeli society exploring patterns of ethnic, class and gender inequality. Her recent book *Concrete Boxes: Mizrahi Women on Israel's Periphery* is published by Wayne State University Press (2018). A visiting professor at the University of Ottawa, Canada and at Oxford University, she will spend her 2018-19 sabbatical year at UIUC

where she will teach classes on Israeli society and culture from a feminist perspective and the class on Jewish Cultures of the World.



## Welcoming Rabbi Efrat Rotem



We are delighted to welcome Rabbi Efrat Rotem to the Program! Rabbi Rotem will be teaching Elementary Modern Hebrew this fall (2018) and it is a great honor for us to have her on the faculty. Rabbi Rotem was ordained through the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem in 2015. She served as the rabbi of Kehilat HaLev in central Tel Aviv, a member congregation of the Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism. She also designed and taught courses and seminars on her

rabbinical outlook, which integrates pluralist Judaism, critical feminism, and queer identity and worldview. In addition she holds an MA in Literature from Tel Aviv University and has translated texts from English to Hebrew. She also studied Creative Writing at Haifa University. This range of experience and interests will invigorate our Hebrew program. We are looking forward to learning from her this fall!



## Introducing New Director of Development, Megan Wolf

For the last 20 years, Megan Wolf has devoted her career to affecting change in the communities in which she lives. She has advanced organizations across the nonprofit sector in San Diego, Chicago and Champaign-Urbana. She broke the cycle of poverty with Habitat for Humanity; helped victims and survivors of domestic violence with Courage Connection; saved the lives of hundreds of dogs, cats, and critters with the Champaign County Humane Society; developed arts organizations at the San Diego Performing Arts League; and supported the work of artists at 40 North, and in Chicago through the Around the Coyote Arts Festival.

Today, Megan is excited to serve as the Director of Development for the Program in Jewish Culture & Society. Megan deeply enjoys working with people to achieve their philanthropic goals and opening doors to meaningful giving opportunities. To reach Megan, please email [meganw@illinois.edu](mailto:meganw@illinois.edu) or call 217-300-7621.





# Recent Ph.D. and Assistant Professor at New College of Florida, Jessica Young Discusses the Academic Job Market

Every year graduate students are confronted with dismal statistics about the job market, and this past year was no different. However, I want to infuse a bit of optimism amongst all the doom and gloom, especially for students affiliated with the Program in Jewish Culture & Society and the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies. Many of you have worked tirelessly to organize conferences, film screenings, and visiting speakers and I want to tell you that these experiences matter and they will make you a strong candidate when you go on the market. As the professorate shrinks, schools are looking for scholar-teachers who can cover a broad range of material. While you may not get this training from your home department, the Program in Jewish Culture & Society will help expand your disciplinary and theoretical horizons, giving you the tools necessary to communicate the importance of your research and teaching to a variety of programs and schools.

While the job market generally heats up in the fall, your preparations will actually begin before you craft your cover letter, research statement, teaching philosophy, and the ever-more prominent diversity statement the summer before you "go on the market." Throughout your graduate career, your participation in the Program's rich interdisciplinary events, workshops, and lectures will help you hone your professional profile. Beyond adding lines to your curriculum vitae, these opportunities will teach you how to network with faculty and visiting scholars, make your work legible to multiple audiences, and give you a broad foundation in fields adjacent to your

own. All these experiences will shape your application materials for the better.

Having learned how to interact professionally with faculty members as a researcher in your own right will help alleviate the nerves of MLA and Skype interviews come winter. My interviews were generally with smaller schools, which meant that I was interacting with search committees comprised of faculty members from across the humanities. The time I spent discussing research with people outside my field thus became an asset. Later, during my campus visit, I met with professors and students from the German, Chinese, Slavic, French, Religion, and Art History departments, to name a few, and knowing a little about each of their fields from my interaction with the Program's affiliated faculty and graduate students helped me translate my dissertation and future research plans across disciplines and ask pertinent questions. Most importantly, my work as a research assistant and reading group organizer demonstrated my dedication to program building, of bringing something beyond teaching and research to a school looking to increase its national profile and community outreach.

This was all made possible through the professionalization opportunities afforded to me by PJCS and HGMS. The job market may be dispiriting, but the work you put in now will help you make the most of any opportunity that comes your way.

Jessica Young's dissertation, "Migrating Memories: Power and

Transcultural Memory in Contemporary South Asian Fiction," traces the visible and invisible modes of memory transmission across national and cultural borders in South Asian literature produced in the United States, England, Canada, and the subcontinent. She is currently working on a second research project that examines memories of gentrification and anti-gentrification activism from multiple global contexts.

While at the University of Illinois, Jessica co-founded the Future of Trauma and Memory Studies reading group and co-edited [\*Days and Memory\*](#), the blog of the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies. This foundation in HGMS deeply informs Jessica's interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching World Literature, where she focuses on issues surrounding colonialism, indigeneity, genocide, state violence, commemoration, and restorative justice from multiple global contexts. Jessica received her B.A. from Reed College and her M.A. from San Francisco State University, both in English. Jessica earned her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in English with a graduate certificate in HGMS, during which time she was awarded the Graduate College's Illinois Distinguished Fellowship, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Fellowship, the Gendell and Shiner Family Fellowship, and was a Visiting Graduate Researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles.

# Fall 2018- Spring 2019 Events

Jewish Studies and HGMS Upcoming Events. Mark your calendars! Check our website for further events and let us know if you'd like to be added to our email list so you can receive reminders and flyers to share.

## **Sunday, September 2, 11a-1p**

Illini Hillel, 503 E. John St., Champaign  
For Students: Fruit, Bagels, Cream Cheese, And Get to Know the Program in Jewish Culture & Society  
Generously supported by Lorelei Rosenthal and Scott Gendell

## **Friday, September 7, Noon**

Book Launch of **Dana Rabin's** *Britain and Its Internal Others*  
English 109

## **Monday, September 17, Noon**

**Rick Esbenshade**, Research Associate, REEEC  
HGMS Faculty seminar  
English 109

## **Monday, October 1, Noon**

*Memory at the End of History*  
**Ned O'Gorman**, Professor, Communication  
HGMS Faculty seminar  
English 109

## **Monday, October 8, 5:00 pm**

**Ruby Namdar**  
21st Century Jewish Writing and the World  
Israel Studies Project  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**Wednesday, October 10, 4:00 pm** at UIC's Institute for Humanities (701 S. Morgan, Lower Level/Stevenson Hall, Chicago)

## **Monday, October 22, 5:00 pm**

**David Bezmozgis**  
21st Century Jewish Writing and the World  
Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**Tuesday, October 23, 7 pm** North Shore Congregation Israel (1185 Sheridan Road, Glencoe)

## **Monday, October 29, Noon**

**Beth Benedix**, reading/discussion of her new book, *Ghost Writer*  
HGMS Faculty seminar  
English 109

## **Monday, November 5, 5:00 pm**

**Elli Stern**, Associate Professor, Religious Studies, Yale  
Vivian Marcus Memorial Lecture Fund  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**Noon:** Jewish Studies workshop

## **Thursday, November 8, 9a-4p**

**Harriet Murav and Gennady Estraiikh** workshop on the occasion of the 100-year anniversary of the Kiev Kultur-Lige  
English 109

## **Monday, December 3, Noon**

**Avital Livny**, Assistant Professor, Political Science  
HGMS Faculty Seminar  
English 109

## **Monday, February 25, 5:00 pm**

**Ayelet Tsabari**  
21st Century Jewish Writing and the World  
Israel Studies Project  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**February 27, Noon** - Standard Club lunch\* and learn, (320 S. Plymouth Ct, Chicago)  
\*Tickets will need to be purchased for Standard Club lunch

## **Friday, March 1, 9a-4p**

2nd Annual HGMS graduate student conference  
Levis 210

## **Monday, March 4, 5pm**

*The Importance of Jewish History: An Impassioned Plea*  
**David Myers**, Sady and Ludwig Kahn Professor of Jewish History, UCLA History Department  
CAS with support from IPRH, Religion, History, SLCL, PJCS, Tobor Family Endowment  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**Noon:** Jewish Studies Workshop, 109 English

## **Friday, March 29, 10a-3p**

21st Century Jewish Writing and the World, scholarly roundtable with Sarah Phillips Casteel, Benjamin Schreier, and Dean Franco  
Levis 210

## **Monday, April 1, 5:00 pm**

**Adam Sutcliffe**, Reader in European History, King's College, London  
Oscar and Rose A. Einhorn Fund  
Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building, 1080  
**Noon:** Jewish Studies Workshop, 109 English

## **Tuesday, April 9, 5:00 pm**

**Nicole Krauss**  
21st Century Jewish Writing and the World  
Spurlock Museum, Knight Auditorium  
MillerComm and Greenfield Lynch with support from: Trowbridge, Creative Writing, PJCS, Comparative Literature, and English  
**Monday, April 8, 7pm** - Northwestern

# Sara Feldman and Brett Kaplan on Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn, Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture, 2017

Thanks to the generous support of the Krouse Family we were able to hear an amazing performance by the inimitable Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn during our first collaboration with the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. During their time on campus, Psoy and Daniel also visited a Yiddish class and offered a scintillating discussion of their eclectic method of coming up with the ideas for their performances over lunch at the Jewish Studies workshop. About 130 people joined us at Krannert for the concert and everyone kept on their toes as Psoy and Daniel produced an amazing linguistic and musical *mélange* of different styles, tones, and tongues. There was even dancing at the end with the audience getting up and joining in.

I would like to thank Sara Feldman for suggesting that we invite them. Indeed, Sara did a great deal to foster Yiddish and Klezmer on campus and in this community during her three years here and for this I am very grateful. My office is right next door to her wonderful Yiddish and Hebrew classes and from what I could glean through the wall the classes were stimulating, active, fun, and full of excellent teaching and learning—just what this program seeks to foster.

Here is how Sara introduced Psoy and Daniel at Krannert: If you came here to hear klezmer, you'll get what you came for, but this is going to be much bigger than traditional klezmer. We are going to hear old songs renewed for our time and surprising connections between languages, cultures, and musical traditions.

Psoy Korolenko is the stage name of Pavel Lion, Ph.D. in Russian

literature. He has lent his talents to klezmer, but his broad repertoire includes diverse genres such as traditional Yiddish folk music, cabaret, rap, and the recovery of Soviet Jewish antifascist music unearthed by Anna Shternshis, who brought video of his performances to Illinois not long ago—a project which I think required real genius on his part. And many other genres. He sings in Russian, English, Yiddish, French, Latin, and other languages, blending them and rhyming them with each other to create new meaning. All of this is backed up by his unparalleled knowledge of context, but played with in astoundingly creative ways.



As one scholar put it, Psoy “brings together things that are unrelated, or don’t want to be related, and discovers something original in its own right.” Expect to catch some of the references and jokes, but you should also be ready to hear one or another corner of the room laugh or sigh when you don’t get the joke. It’s okay, few people get all of it. That’s part of the fun.

Dayeynu, it would have been enough, right? But tonight we have double the talent!

Daniel Kahn is a singer, songwriter, poet, and actor, a Detroiter who relocated to Berlin. In addition to his appearances on the Yiddish stage, Daniel has given a tremendous gift both to Yiddish culture and to contemporary music. Many of us in the Yiddish and social justice worlds are aware of the connection between the two, but he has made this connection concrete through his music. I learned a new word last night from him, “trads,” which is a short version of his characteristic “tradaptations”: translation and adaptation at once. In addition to writing his own new songs, Daniel “tradapts” Yiddish classics of the struggle for justice, reminding us that our struggles in these frightening times—facing mass unemployment, poverty, and desperate migrations, the rise of fascism—are not new, and that people have faced these problems before us with bravery, pride, and loving solidarity.

Together, these polyglot musicians keep us laughing at the absurdity produced by our language barriers, and they keep us going with the knowledge that we are not alone, that we stand together with generations of people who are separated from us by centuries, languages, or geography in our hope for a fairer, bolder, and more loving world. And in the meantime, we have each other, we have the beauty and humor of this wonderful music, to help us get through this.

# Highlights of 2017/18



**Mara Thacker Workshop**



**Advisory Council Meeting at Scott Gendell's House**



**Seth Sanders, Sara Feldman, Wayne Pitard and students for Seth's workshop  
Thank you, Goldberg family!**



**Daniel Kahn at his workshop with Psoy Korolenko**

# Highlights of 2017/18



**Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn  
Performance**



**Psoy and Daniel visit the Yiddish class**



**Ariella Azoulay HGMS Faculty Workshop**



**Student Talia and Jewish Studies dog,  
Louie**

# Convergences: The Spectacular Performances of Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell

By Brett Ashley Kaplan

Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell's campus visit was a major highlight of this academic year and of the Program in Jewish Culture & Society's history! About 200 people filled the Spurlock Museum's Knight Auditorium during a blinding, freezing rain storm on February 20, 2018. Had the weather been fine, I don't know how everyone would have fit in. The audience was a diverse mix of students, faculty, and community members—with some special visitors from out of town just for the occasion.

At an historical moment when walls and divisions are being reinforced we need to celebrate artists such as Russell whose work and lives confound borders and offer intersectional identities.

One of his projects, entitled *Convergence: Spirituals from the Shtetl. Davening from the Delta*, mines diverse cultural sources such as negro spirituals and Yiddish labor union songs with musical idioms ranging from jazz, blues, klezmer, and gospel. This groundbreaking work challenges the divisions between peoples and musical genres alike. Russell drew on these inspirations in his stunning performance at the Spurlock. Video-excerpts from this concert are [here](#).

In another project, *Written in Breath*, Russell charts the differences and resonances between Jewish texts such as the Talmud and Yiddish songs. He performs with klezmer musicians such

as Veretski Pass and other august artists who bring together Ashkenazi musical styles with other musical traditions.

In recent work under the heading of Tsvey Brider (Two brothers in Yiddish) Anthony has created



mesmerizing vocal and visual combinations such as images of Josephine Baker overlaid with his rich and full voice singing Yiddish songs. Some of these amazing videos are here: <http://tsveybrider.com/>

Russell was originally trained as an opera singer but found Yiddish music through the Coen brothers' film *A Serious Man*. From a Christian, military family in Northern California, he was obsessed with classical music and opera from a very young age. He describes watching the film *Amadeus* over and over again as a child. His first operatic role was a choral part in

*Madama Butterfly*, and his other roles included playing a preacher in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and a union soldier in the Philip Glass Opera, *Appomattox*. Russell converted to Judaism and began an intensive study of Yiddish music and often

combines Yiddish songs with African-American songs to create counterintuitive convergences.

He has performed all over the world including in Copenhagen, Berlin, Tel Aviv, Toronto, and Montreal and in such revered spaces as the Kennedy Center in D.C. Of his performance at the Kennedy Center one review found Russell's voice to be "perhaps the

most beautiful I have heard in person" (Sam Hall, *DC Metro Theater Arts*, 30 March 2016). Another reviewer describes Russell as a "stunningly authentic, beautifully voiced singer of Yiddish art song" (Jason Victor Serinus, *Bay Area Reporter*, 23 February 2017).

Many other audience members and critics have been similarly wowed and moved by this innovative artist.

It is often said that Yiddish is a dying language. This is and is not true. On the one hand, many of the millions of people who were murdered in the Nazi genocide were Yiddish speakers. At the same time, assimilation on the other side of the Atlantic was rapidly reducing the vast numbers of Yiddish speakers in New York city—Yiddish daily newspapers were declining and many Yiddish speaking immigrants were actively encouraging their children to speak English, not Yiddish. On the other hand, there has been a creative and vibrant revitalization of Yiddish—and Russell is a exemplar of this spirit. Yiddish programs are growing and many non-Jews are engaged in the study of Yiddish language, culture, literature, and history. The revitalization of Yiddish has been a priority for our program and it was wonderful to have Anthony here to visit a Yiddish class and engage with a group of people interested in Jewish Studies and Yiddish during a workshop.

At the workshop, Anthony showed us some of the Tsvey Brider videos and we discussed their complex interplay between musical styles, visual idioms, and their questioning of identity in diverse ways. He also discussed what he called the “amorphous borders of Yiddishland” and the hope that creative spaces of cross cultural interaction could create real change. Attendees had many keen questions to ask and the conversation could have gone on indefinitely.

In addition to visiting a Yiddish class and a Music class and offering a

workshop, Anthony also had lunch at BNAAC--Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center with students where he engaged with them in an informal setting.

I would like to thank Jewish Studies faculty member Sara Feldman for suggesting we invite Anthony Russell and Masumi Iriye and Sarah Elder for putting this visit so beautifully together. Masumi seems to have some sort of magical powers—I do not know anyone else who could have smuggled a Steinway into the Spurlock museum! Anthony was accompanied on this beautiful piano by the inimitable Rachel Jensen, a pianist of extraordinary sensitvitiy who is much admired and beloved in this community. I thank heartily Julie Gunn and Martin Camargo for writing letters of support for the MillerComm.

An enormous thank you to MillerComm and CAS; this series is so important, especially given the budgetary limits many of us face now. I thank the following for their support: African American Studies, German, History, Religion, IPRH, REEEC, SLCL, School of Music, and Spurlock Museum. I am also grateful to Hillel, Sinai Temple, and the Robert E Brown Center for World Music for spreading the word. I thank BNAAC for hosting the lunch with Anthony.



# Michael Shapiro launches *Wrestling with Shylock*

By David Kay



On Monday, March 5th, Michael Shapiro, co-founder and first director of the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, returned to campus to speak about *Wrestling With Shylock: Jewish Responses to The Merchant of Venice*, in celebration of the essay collection with that name edited by Shapiro and Edna Nahshon and published by Cambridge University Press in 2017. Speaking to an attentive audience in Levis Faculty Center, Shapiro sketched in the origins of Shakespeare's character and traced his changing presentation from Elizabethan times to the present.

Shylock, Shapiro noted, is a much more complex character than the

nameless "Jew" of Shakespeare's source or other Jewish stage villains of the era, like Barabas in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. Though Shakespeare emphasizes Shylock's comic stinginess and the legalistic thinking attributed to Jews by the apostle Paul, he grounds Shylock's speech in Jewish ritual practice and scripture and presents him as a grieving husband, an abandoned father, and an articulate target of Christian hostility who asserts his own humanity in the face of persecution. While the question of Shakespeare's original intentions cannot finally be answered, Shylock's multi-faceted character has invited changing literary and dramatic interpretations as attitudes toward Jewishness and the Jewish situation evolve. Presented as a melodramatic villain of astonishing ferocity in the eighteenth century by Charles Macklin, Shylock was gradually humanized by the great nineteenth century actors Edmund Kean, Edwin Booth, and Henry Irving. These actors sometimes eliminated the fifth act of Shakespeare's play, thereby ending it with Shylock's tragic defeat. Irving looked on Shylock as "the type of a persecuted race" and motivated his vengefulness by stressing the betrayal of his daughter Jessica. Counterpointing these sympathetic portrayals of Shylock were nineteenth century burlesque theater versions that caricatured him as an old-clothes

dealer or immigrant street peddler, a cousin of Dickens' Fagin. Twentieth-century actors have drawn on these traditions in various ways, ranging from Sir Laurence Olivier's attempt to recapture Irving's Victorian Jewish gentleman to Warren Mitchell's employment of a heavy Yiddish accent in the 1980 BBC television version and Anthony Sher's conception of Shylock as "an Eastern Jew closer to his own Semitic roots" in the 1987 RSC production. In the latter two productions, Shylock's otherness and his desire for vengeance were offset by heightening the violence of his forced conversion and the abuse he suffers at the hands of the lesser Venetians.

Shapiro also identified several other strategies in recent productions or literary adaptations that contextualize Shylock's hostility to Antonio or complicate our response to him. One is to decenter Shylock by making his daughter Jessica's story as important as his and to complicate the emotional relationship between them. For example, Henry Goodman's Shylock in the 1999 National Theatre production was both a loving and an overly possessive father who drove his daughter to marry "out"; the ending focused on Jessica as she reprised the Hebrew song about a good wife they earlier sang together, her anguished face expressing regret and sorrow.



Recent prose adaptations by writers like Erica Jong also explore Jessica's plight as the immigrant's daughter, *belle juive* or *schöne Jüdin*, forlorn wife or remorseful child, making her the protagonist of her own story. A second strategy is to reset the play in Fascist Germany or Italy, which insures that Shylock automatically becomes a sympathetic victim, as his Venetian persecutors evoke those responsible for the Holocaust. George Tabori's 1966 Berkshire Theatre Festival went even further, presenting the play "As Performed in Theresienstadt" by Jewish prisoners for the entertainment of their Nazi guards; in successive curtain calls the actors were taken off as if to execution, leaving only a pile of clothes on stage at the end. A third strategy is to universalize the play's Jewish-Christian conflict by mapping it onto other racial, religious, or ethnic antagonisms. Peter Sellar's 1994 production set the play in Venice Beach, Los Angeles, casting Latinos as the macho male Venetians, Asian-Americans as Portia and her entourage, and at the bottom of the social order, African-Americans as the Jewish characters. An interesting current example of this strategy is Shishir Kurup's *The Merchant ON Venice*, first performed by the Silk Road Project in Chicago in 2007, then with appropriate

changes as *The Merchant of Vembley* in London in 2015, and now revived again in Chicago. Written in iambic pentameter, Kurup's version depicts the conflict between a Muslim "Shylock" and his Hindu neighbors along Venice Boulevard in Culver City, Los Angeles, where old religious antagonisms among competing groups of South Asian immigrants aggravate current social and economic disparities.

Shapiro's presentation gave the audience a new appreciation of Shakespeare's play as a complex organism that continually opens new possibilities for interpretation. Shylock continues to evolve as actors, directors, and adapters respond to historical events like the Shoah and to social and political developments in the world outside the playhouse. Readers who want to explore Shylock's transformations further will find the eighteen essays in Shapiro and Nahshon's collection a valuable guide to *The Merchant's* theatrical, literary, and artistic history.

David Kay is Emeritus Professor of English who specializes in sixteenth and seventeenth century drama



# Bruce Rosenstock on Julia Cohen's Einhorn Lecture: *Jews for Jihad? Jewish Citizens in an Islamic Empire*



**Ann Einhorn and Julia Cohen**

This year, Julia Cohen, Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt, was the Einhorn Visiting Lecturer. We are so grateful to Ann Einhorn and the Einhorn Family for their support. On Monday, April 9, 2018, Prof. Cohen offered a lunchtime colloquium and the Einhorn lecture later that afternoon. Her colloquium previewed an article that encapsulates the argument of her new book. This project will examine the ways that Sephardi Jews pictured Spain from the time of the expulsion in 1492 until the present. Prof. Cohen's article argued that for most of the time that Sephardi Jews lived in the Ottoman Empire, they did not long to return to Spain nor did they imagine their expulsion to be a terrible trauma that disrupted their lives. Rather, they sought to integrate the Ottoman Empire into their newfound home. Spain simply lacked any central place in their lives, and many Sephardi Jews were not even aware that they were speaking a dialect of Spanish. The late nineteenth century changed things when efforts were made by the French outreach

organization, Alliance Israélite Universelle, to bring greater awareness of European ideas to the Sephardi Jews of the Ottoman Empire. Then it became a matter of pride that Sephardi Jews preserved folklore from pre-1492 Spain and maintained a dialect of Spanish from Spain's Golden Age. In her Einhorn lecture, "Jews for Jihad?: Sephardi Jews in an Islamic State," Prof. Cohen further explored the ways that Sephardi Jews sought to integrate as upstanding and loyal citizens of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Much like American Jews of the twentieth century, Sephardi Jews embraced their home country because it offered them equal opportunity with other minorities for schooling and participation in the political affairs of the state. Prof. Cohen discussed the problems that these new opportunities also brought, especially in relation to other minorities who lived in countries

like Greece and Bulgaria that had been conquered by the Ottomans. Sephardi Jews did not have an allegiance to a formerly independent nation and therefore they were held up to us as a "model millet" or "model minority," thus instigating the resentment of other minorities. In the late nineteenth century, however, Zionism drew some Sephardi Jews into tense relations with the state, especially after 1918 when Palestine no longer was a part of the Turkish state. In both her afternoon colloquium and evening lecture, Prof. Cohen offered us new perspectives and new insights into the rich and little-known story of the Sephardic Jewish integration into the Ottoman state.



# Book Launch Week

By Brett Ashley Kaplan

The final events of the 2017-2018 year were a trio of wonderful book launches by Jewish Studies and Comparative Literature Faculty members Rachel Harris, Eric Calderwood, and Lilya Kaganovsky.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Rachel Harris discussed her book, *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema*. This book is a feminist reading of women in Israeli cinema and Rachel showed slides demonstrating the history of women in Israeli cinema from the beginning of the nation until the establishment of a feminist collective and an interactive website devoted to feminist readings of Israeli film. “While no one can deny Israel’s Western women’s advancements, feminist filmmakers frequently turn to Israel’s less impressive underbelly as sources for their inspiration. Their films have focused on sexism, the negative impact of militarism on women’s experience, rape culture, prostitution, and sexual abuse. These films also tend to include subjects from society’s geographical periphery and social margins, such as female foreign workers, women, and refugees. *Warriors, Witches, Whores* is divided into three major sections and each considers a different form of feminist engagement. The first part explores films that situate women in traditionally male spheres of militarism, considering the impact of interjecting women within hegemonic spaces or reconceptualizing them in feminist ways. The second part recovers the narratives of women’s experience that were previously marginalized or silenced, thereby creating a distinct female space that

offers new kinds of storytelling and cinematic aesthetics that reflect feminist expressions of identity. The third part offers examples of feminist activism that reach beyond the boundaries of the film to comment on social issues. This section demonstrates how feminists use film (and work within the film industry) in order to position women in society. While there are thematic overlaps between the chapters, each section marks structural differences in the modes of feminist response.” <http://www.wsupress.wayne.edu/books/detail/warriors-witches-whores>

Then, on April 25<sup>th</sup>, Eric and Lilya discussed *Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018) and *The Voice of Technology: Soviet Cinema’s Transition to Sound, 1928-1935* (Indiana University Press, 2018). These two books, although on completely geographically and historically distinct topics, are both about inventions or constructions. After a lovely introduction thanking all of those who helped him and all of the many interlocutors he encountered in his research, Eric discussed how al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Iberia) became the centerpiece of Moroccan identity. As he put it, “you can turn over a rock and al-Andalus pops up.” There is Adalusi music (a completely fictive construct), there is a huge Adalusian tourism industry, there are films, books, etc., dedicated to al-Andalus. But, Eric argues, al-Andalus is in fact a modern invention and came about because of Franco’s calls to claim a certain Morocco. “The Spanish way of talking about Morocco became the Moroccan way of talking

about Morocco,” he argues and, further, the “Spanish were the victims of their own success.” He described how the relationship with Colonial history migrates and takes on new ideological contours. Eric’s book argues that “Morocco’s Andalus identity is a product of the colonial encounter between Spain and Morocco.” And, further, that colonialism and anticolonial nationalism “often work two sides of the same coin, reinforcing each other and reproducing each other’s logic.” This envisioning of both sides of the coin unseats French colonialism as the centerpiece of Moroccan colonial history. By re-writing the story of Moroccan colonialism in this way, Eric’s book reconfigures our conceptions of long-held binaries such as Europe and Islam.



Rachel Harris



Eric Calderwood

The audience had many questions including about the origin of the word “al-Andalus.” So, apparently, it is often interpreted as an Arabic word and that it may well be but it could also possibly be a Visigoth word. Another audience member asked about the archival practices in gathering materials and Eric answered that the Spanish texts pertaining to al-Andalus were mostly exported to private libraries in Spain whereas the Arabic texts largely remained in Morocco. It is clear this book is poised to make a big impact on multiple fields.

Then Lilya turned to *The Voice of Technology: Soviet Cinema’s Transition to Sound, 1928-1935* (Indiana University Press, 2018). This is her second book, preceded by *How the Soviet Man Was Unmade* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008). Lilya has also co-edited several volumes and published many articles which illuminate the range of her scholarship. *The Voice of Technology* traces the transition in Soviet cinema to sound from

1928-1935 and articulates how the belated transition actually allowed for creative uses of sound in multiple languages. The prominence of Stalin was linked with the emergence of sound. The Soviet Union was projecting itself as a multilingual, multicultural utopia in which were unheard capitalist side effects such as racism. Of course, the reality was quite different. But the cinematic imaginary in these early sound years bolstered this utopian view. At the end of her talk, Lilya presented clips from a most fascinating film, *The Return of Nathan Bekker* (1932). In the film Nathan Bekker, a Jewish character from a shtetl, returns after 28 years as a brick layer in America. With him he brings Jim, a fellow traveler who has come to inhabit the Soviet utopia. Jim is black and, after registering a momentary silent surprise, Nathan’s father simply asks, “Is he Jewish?” and then welcomes him and ushers him into his hovel. Lilya described how the film was released simultaneously in Russian and Yiddish and how the interactions between Jim and Nathan’s father Tsale (played by Solomon Mikhoels) express a “remarkable conflation of Yiddish and African American culture, with Tsale clearly adopting Jim as a fellow Jew.”

Lilya received many questions from her engaged audience about her archival research and about the nature of Soviet film. When she began researching the book most of the films were only in Russian archives. Now, most of them are readily available on YouTube. Lilya’s book offers an

important intervention into film history and Russian and Soviet cultural studies and will be of interest to scholars and students in many disciplines.

We will continue the tradition of book launching next year, starting at noon on Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup> in 109 English with the launch of Dana Rabin’s *Britain and its Internal Others, 1750-1800: Under Rule of Law*.



Lilya Kaganovsky

# Sayed Kashua Launches New Book *Track Changes*

By Brett Ashley Kaplan

On April 23, 2018 the UIUC campus and beyond got a sneak-preview of Sayed Kashua's newest novel, *Track Changes*. Sayed is a prolific and internationally lauded Palestinian-Israeli journalist, novelist, columnist, and screenwriter. So far, *Track Changes* is only out in Hebrew (and recently on the Israeli best seller list). Sayed read part of the soon-to-be-published-in-English translation to an attentive crowd of about 50 people—students, faculty, community members.

The novel tells the story of a ghost writer who begins to invent memories. The title tracks the process of making changes to those memories and in the Hebrew version the changes are typographically visible on the page—in Hebrew and Arabic. It remains to be seen exactly how the English translation (to be published by Grove Press) will handle all the typological inventiveness of the original but I am sure I am not alone in anticipating its publication with enormous enthusiasm. Sayed received many apt questions that demonstrated how closely his rapt audience listened to his reading. Someone asked about writing from self-imposed exile, for example, writing from afar (the novel was written entirely while Sayed has been a Visiting Clinical Professor here at UIUC in the Program in Jewish Culture & Society) about Israel. This led to a complicated response about being at home at not at home and

about what it means to relocate and view your “native” country from a distance, as one might view earth from the moon. Another person asked about the writing process, about how an artist whose work moves so fluidly between novels, screenplays, and journalistic columns can determine ahead of time in what genre any given idea will appear. Sayed then replied with his characteristic humor that he had a great idea for a novel with a deep internal structure but he sold it to an Israeli television producer in order to send his daughter to college!

When he framed and introduced *Track Changes*, before he began reading, Sayed explained that it formed the end of a quartet of novels that began with *Dancing Arabs*. When asked to expand on this, he said that all four of his first novels featured characters who resonated with each other—who may be differently described in one novel as a lawyer, and in another a photographer, etc. but who are sort of similar as if they were in the same family. So, if *Track Changes* does become the end of a novelistic quartet, it will be fascinating to see what this versatile writer produces next.

It ended up being a bit of a melancholy evening, despite the engaged audience, because Sayed and his family are moving to St. Louis this summer so that Sayed can enroll in the lauded international Ph.D. program in Creative Writing at Washington University. Originally a JUF

supported postdoc through the Israel Studies Project, Sayed then stayed on as a Provost, LAS, and Program in Jewish Culture & Society supported three-year Visiting Clinical Professor. We were able to offer him a three year continuation of this contract and I am so grateful to everyone who helped secure this. The list is long but I would especially like to thank Martin Camargo, Cole, Nancy Benson, Feng Sheng Hu, John Wilkin, Bill Bernhardt, Andreas Cangelaris, Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, and Tracy Sulkin for their enormous help in bringing the offer forward.



In the past four years, Sayed has been exceedingly generous to this campus and community and also given some wonderful readings and discussions in Chicago to some of our supporters there. Here in Champaign we screened the film based on his early novels, *Borrowed Identity* (to a crowd of about 250 people at the Art Theatre), launched his collection, *Native* (held at the Public Library to encourage on- and off-campus groups to attend), and screened sections of his TV shows *Arab Labor* and *The Writer*. So many people have benefitted enormously from his time here.

Before *Track Changes*, Sayed published the novels *Dancing Arabs*, *Second Person Singular*, and *Let it Be Morning*. As well as being the director of his department, I am a huge fan of his novels. All of them are sensitively written and deftly combine personal stories with reflections on the political situation for Palestinians within Israel. At a formal level, *Second Person Singular* is the most complex of these first three novels and brings an aching sensibility to the story of a young man who chooses to bury his Arab identity in order to meld into Israeli society by choosing a borrowed (Jewish) identity. Including fascinating plot twists, multiple perspectives, and a very subtle analysis of the larger questions at play in Israel-Palestine the novel is absolutely brilliant.

Sayed's prominence has risen exponentially since he agreed to come to Illinois and his articles in widely circulated fora such as *The New Yorker* often feature our community in

ways that put us on the map. Kashua's voice is regularly present in international newspapers such as *Ha'aretz*, *Le Monde* and *The Guardian*. During his time in Illinois he has been featured on various NPR programs and also toured numerous university campuses, to great acclaim.

While on campus he taught courses in TV Writing, Comedy Writing, Screen Writing and special topics courses such as The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Through Cinema as well as Advanced Hebrew. <https://blogs.illinois.edu/view/1103/620402>

Sayed and his family will be sorely missed and we wish them all the very best as they embark on their new adventure in St. Louis.



# Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies

By Brett Ashley Kaplan

The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, Memory Studies was created to bring together scholars across the University of Illinois campus who are interested in comparative genocide issues and who work on questions of trauma and memory in the contexts of the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Armenia, and other geographic and historical sites. HGMS is very committed to fostering graduate student education and to that end we have several projects ongoing. First, there is a Future of Trauma and Memory Studies reading group organized by HGMS students and housed in the seminar room in the Jewish Studies/HGMS office. This reading group encourages students and faculty from English, Comparative Literature, French, Art History, Library Sciences, German, and other programs and departments to exchange ideas. Second, HGMS is affiliated with Mnemonics, an international summer school that holds an annual conference. I participated in and commented on student work at Mnemonics 2017 in Frankfurt on a panel entitled “Inter- and Plurimedial Memory;” this conference included one HGMS student who earned a scholarship from PJCS, Dilara Caliskan. Third, we are encouraging HGMS students to become engaged in the program by offering them chances to write for the newsletter and/or the blog and to perform.

Because of all of these graduate student activities many potential incoming graduate students choose

Illinois so that they can be part of this vibrant intellectual community. But HGMS also organizes many events to benefit the campus and off-campus communities. We have been able to produce a huge number of wonderful conferences, lectures, roundtables etc. on either a shoestring budget or with funds raised externally. Our big event this year was the first ever UIUC graduate student conference in memory studies. Here is how we framed our Call For Papers: “We hope that this symposium will showcase the diverse and wonderful work within memory studies (broadly conceived) that students are doing here. It will be an opportunity to share ideas and resources, to schmooze and connect. This will also be a great time to practice conference papers and receive invaluable feedback from faculty and other graduate students. We invite applications from graduate students working in different fields and with diverse interests across the UIUC campus. These aspects of memory studies might include (but are not limited to): racial aspects of memory, neuroscience, disability studies, how societies remember, the construction of national narratives, cultural and/or religious practices of memory, museums, archiving, representation and art, sciences of memory (or science and memory), technological aspects of memory, politics of memory, forgetting, erasing, and oversaturating.”

We received 15 applications and the organizing committee arranged the

speakers into panels each with a faculty respondent. All agreed that the day was a huge success! The papers were excellent and the faculty offered superb feedback. We have agreed that this will be an annual event and are planning next year’s conference to be on Friday March 1 at Levis. I would like to offer enormous thanks to the graduate student organizing committee: Claire Baytas, Claire Branigan, Dilara Caliskan, Helen Makhdoumian, and Naomi Taub.

Other HGMS events this year included a fascinating screening of *The Destruction of Memory* with a skyped-in Q & A with the director. For more about this screening, please see p. 24.

This year we also launched the HGMS faculty seminar series. Tim Wedig (Global Studies) offered a workshop on Rwanda, Anke Pinkert (German) discussed her recent work in memory studies, Peter Fritzsche (History) discussed his recent chapter “Where was God?,” a guest to campus, Ariella Azoulay (Brown) presented a workshop on photography and memory, Khatchig Mouradian (Columbia) presented on the Armenian Genocide. All of these workshops drew an engaged group of mostly faculty and graduate students who asked probing questions.

On the next page are HGMS events coming up in 2018-2019. We hope you will join us at these events.

# 2018/19 The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide and Memory Studies Events

**Monday, September 17, Noon**

**Rick Esbenshade**, Research Associate, REEEC

HGMS Faculty seminar

English 109

**Monday, October 1, Noon**

*Memory at the End of History*

**Ned O’Gorman**, Professor, Communication,

HGMS Faculty seminar

English 109

**Monday, October 29, Noon**

**Beth Benedix**, reading/discussion of her new book,

*Ghost Writer*

HGMS Faculty seminar

English 109

**Monday, December 3, Noon**

**Avital Livny**, Assistant Professor, Political Science

HGMS Faculty Seminar

English 109

**Friday, March 1, 9a-4p**

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HGMS graduate student conference





# Destruction of Memory

By Helen Makhdounian and Claire Baytas

“The Voice of Lemkin Could Be Heard Distantly Returning”: Implications of Tim Slade’s Documentary *The Destruction of Memory*

On October 9th, 2017, the [Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies](#) (HGMS) hosted a campus and community screening of the 2016 documentary [The Destruction of Memory](#), directed by Tim Slade and narrated by actress Sophie Okonedo. A conversation via Skype between Slade and audience members from across the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign campus followed the screening. The screening of this exigent film, which invites its viewership to closely consider the relevance of what Raphael Lemkin once termed the “cultural” dimension of genocide: the destruction of cultural property, and the Skype discussion could not have come at a better time.

During Fall 2017, Professor Brett Kaplan taught the Introduction to Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies graduate seminar. Members of our interdisciplinary class, many of whom presented at the [One Day Graduate Symposium in Memory Studies](#) on campus April 6, 2018, engage with the histories, legacies, and memories of diverse traumatic events in different national contexts, past and present. Broadly, then, the documentary offered us another avenue to grapple with some of the questions that we recurrently raised in class. That is, we regularly discussed the politics, stakes, and potentials that working comparatively within the fields of trauma and memory studies affords and the codification of terminology that informs processes of identifying, historicizing, and adjudicating acts of mass violence. In what follows, we will focus our reflection on the documentary

around some of its comparative gestures. Before we do so, however, we want to provide a brief overview of the film.

Specifically, Slade’s documentary is based upon Robert Bevan’s book, entitled [The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War](#) (2006). Bevan, a widely-published journalist, architecture critic for *The London Evening Standard*, and member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, examines in his book a variety of cases of war and conflict during which physical structures of cultural and historical significance were razed to the ground. Slade’s documentary walks its viewership through a selection of historical instances analyzed in Bevan’s book, employing video clips, photographs, and interviews with witnesses, scholars of genocide, and experts on cultural heritage sites. A few case studies examined in the film include the Siege of Sarajevo in the mid-nineties, the bombing of Germany during the Second World War, and the actions of the self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Slade’s juxtaposition of case studies of cultural destruction—or the annihilation of irreplaceable artwork, artifacts, and historical sites—in the 20th and 21st centuries comes to the fore as the documentary’s primary comparative gesture. Indeed, the film begins with a series of clips in which interviewees articulate the purpose of perpetrators’ deliberate destruction of cultural property before, during, and after presumably historically-bound acts of mass violence. This includes the words of Simon Maghakyan, an Armenian American educator and activist, who draws upon the history of the Armenian Genocide to assert, by “targeting monuments,” for example, “you are oppressing the people

and making it easier to get rid of them, not just to wipe out their physical record and make it impossible for them to return, but also using it as a weapon.” We will later discuss in more detail the effects of the film’s return to such arguments, which it does by situating collective traumatic histories and ensuing memory work in conversation. For now, we want to map another key conceptual knot of connection that percolates throughout the film and manifests most legibly when Okonedo states in her voiceover regarding a trial judgment as part of the proceedings for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), “The voice of Lemkin could be heard distantly returning.”

This comment about the pertinence of Lemkin’s words also welcomes audiences to recall the beginning of the documentary, which prepares viewers to ask the following of the temporally and spatially distant yet intimately linked contexts that the film ultimately references: how do these histories lend themselves to a call for an expansion of the definition of the term “genocide” to include a key component Lemkin originally proposed? Indeed, the documentary illuminates that while the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on December 9, 1948, the definition of genocide in legal terms is best understood when seen as a culmination of years of efforts by Lemkin and when situated within a larger trajectory of declarations on the laws of war and war crimes within international law.

In this vein, the documentary illuminates that clauses to protect cultural property in times of war were introduced in early twentieth-century peace conferences, such as in The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and the inclusion of wanton destruction of cultural property as part of a list of 32 individual criminal acts identified by the Commission on Responsibility of the Authors of War, which was created by victorious Allies to investigate allegations of criminality against the leaders of the defeated German and Ottoman Empires. While the documentary, like others, goes on to note how the failure to prosecute the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide informed Lemkin's conceptualization and coinage of the term "genocide," it departs from others by seemingly arguing for 1933, 1944, and 1946 as years just as defining as 1948 (if not more so) in the genesis of the term "genocide." At a League of Nations legal conference in 1933, historian of genocide Dirk Moses explains, Lemkin proposed the prosecution of two new international crimes: "vandalism" (attack on cultural property) and "barbarism" (what we would now call genocide, physical attacks on peoples). States in the League of Nations at that time declined to criminalize these kinds of acts and in 1944, Lemkin used "genocide" as a single term for what he earlier called barbarism and vandalism. Shortly after, in 1946, early drafts of the genocide convention, commissioned by the United Nations General Assembly, defined genocide as one of three acts: physical, biological, or cultural genocide. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand objected to the inclusion of a cultural

dimension because, as Moses asserts, they "worried about the fallout from their treatment of indigenous peoples and their cultures." Thus, with the exclusion of cultural elements, the 1948 convention remains "essentially what Lemkin proposed as barbarism in 1933."

By "reading" what is present in the 1948 convention in relation to what is absent from Lemkin's original proposals and the repercussions of this removal, *The Destruction of Memory* prepares audiences to contend with the implications of arguments presented through Okenodo's voiceover about succeeding legal documents that address attacks on cultural heritage and property. These include the ruling of appeal judges in the ICTY in April 2015 that targeted cultural destruction cannot be considered as evidence of genocide nor possibly even intent of genocide. These also include the citation of "military necessity" to cloud intent, the lack of recognition of the intents to suppress the culture of groups as a matter of human rights (despite arguments during the adoption of the 1948 convention that this question would one day be dealt with as such), and the need to protect cultural heritage more than through a document such as the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict that is bound by the rules of war. In so doing, viewers are deliberately left to imagine the potential repercussions of, as Bonnie Burnham, President Emirata of the World Monuments Fund, posits, recognizing cultural heritage destruction as a crime against humanity and as Bevan asserts in an interview in the documentary, inserting those vandalism clauses back into the 1948 genocide convention.

One way in which *The Destruction of Memory* emphasizes the significance of taking into consideration attacks on cultural heritage and property within the study of genocide and mass violence is through the connections the documentary makes between the numerous case studies it examines. The manner in which *The Destruction of Memory* links the variety of historical events with which it engages is not done arbitrarily: the film leaves its viewership with a few key impactful messages as a result of its comparative approach. Firstly, the documentary underlines the repetitive nature of the strategies employed by those who set out to eradicate a certain group of people. One can notice across the different cases mentioned in the film that the eradication of objects and/or buildings representative of the targeted group's culture and history is an often carefully arranged dimension of the overall plan of genocide. However, it is not just *the ways in which* genocide and acts of mass violence are plotted and carried out that are portrayed as symptomatic of a common phenomenon. *The Destruction of Memory* furthermore demonstrates that the underlying *intentions* of the perpetrators when they plot to destroy cultural property tend to be similar: they are fueled by motivations such as launching a symbolic attack on a group's collective identity or disseminating fear and intimidation. During the lengthy interview with Bevan that appears in the film, he explains the "carpet bombing" of Germany by the Allies during the Second World War as "clearly a tactic to attack historic cities... [in order to] to demoralize people."

Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels' diaries are subsequently quoted by Okonedo to reveal that the Axis powers had similar intentions. "Like the English," Goebbels proclaimed, "we must attack centers of culture... such centers should be leveled to the ground." This point is driven home even further with regard to the Croat-Bosniak War of the 1990s, when the film recalls Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulic's words from her elegy to the Mostar Bridge. Yet again, an attack on a physical structure is described as an attack on identity: "because [the bridge] was the product of both individual creativity and collective experience, it transcended our individual destiny... the bridge was all of us, forever." In each case study, the desires of those committing the crimes and the willful nature with which they commit them are clearly portrayed to be similar across time and space. *The Destruction of Memory* thereby traces the common threads in perpetrator practices for its viewership, demonstrating the unsettling ways in which many aspects of the implementation of genocide tend to repeat themselves throughout history.

The documentary's manner of connecting these different events furthermore serves to blur the line between the past and present for its viewers. This is a result of the fact that the film touches upon both historical and contemporary instances of destruction of cultural property, suggesting that all are trends of the same phenomenon. As a result, when learning about these attacks on symbols of culture during genocide or war that occurred decades ago, the film's viewership cannot simply disregard these events as tragic losses of the distant past. The

documentary mentions both at its beginning and examines in more detail towards the end contemporary instances in which the Islamic State is acting to eradicate objects and sites representative of cultural heritage. The group's annihilation of the Tomb of Jonah in 2014 and their looting, damaging, and destroying artifacts of the Mosul Museum in 2015 are but two of the examples highlighted in the film. Therefore, although certain precious artifacts or structures of the past may already be lost, the film makes it clear that plans to eradicate materials of cultural and historical relevance in certain areas are still being carried out and will continue to be in the future. *The Destruction of Memory* thus encourages its audience to recognize the continued significance of the destruction of cultural property as well as the importance of speaking out against such acts.

One of the many intriguing avenues for future reflection that *The Destruction of Memory* opens up for us as viewers is inquiry into the ethics of studying the cultural dimension of genocide. Professor Brett Kaplan posed a question on this very subject to Slade during the question and answer session that followed our October 9th screening, asking whether he found it morally problematic to produce a film that gives more screen time and attention to the loss of objects, buildings, and other structures during genocide than it does to the loss of human life. One could, on the one hand, take issue with the filmmakers' choice to focus at length on critiquing violence against physical edifices rather than violence against human beings, which was simultaneously

occurring during these moments in history cited in the film. On the other hand, it can also be argued that this documentary portrays the different dimensions of genocide as closely interconnected. As previously quoted, Maghakyan for one qualifies "targeting monuments" as a "weapon" against people and as an act of "oppression." Early in the film, Okonedo lingers upon Lemkin's words on this same subject: "physical and biological genocide," Lemkin claimed, "are always preceded by cultural genocide or by an attack on symbols of the group." The film thereby also proposes that the destruction of cultural property can serve as an indicator of a broader plan to eliminate an entire people, which begins with the elimination of the physical proof of that people's history.

We thus conclude by proposing that how one understands and chooses to represent the links between violence against human beings and cultural heritage broadly construed is a matter open to debate. It is this type of conversation—challenging, yet important on an ethical level—that *The Destruction of Memory* will serve to incite among its viewers. With each screening, Slade's documentary will reopen discussions concerning the study of the different dimensions of acts of mass violence and genocide of our societies' pasts, thereby promoting an enduring critical engagement with these crucial topics.

# Notes on James Friedman's "12 Nazi Concentration Camps"

By Brett Ashley Kaplan

On Monday November 6, 2017, with generous support from the Greenfield Lynch lecture series, we hosted a panel about James Friedman's striking series, "12 Nazi Concentration Camps." The panel included James Friedman, Gary Weissman (University of Cincinnati), and me. For the month of November Friedman's series was on display at the Illini Union Gallery via projections. I would like to thank Deborah Lynch for making all this possible, the staff at the Illini Union for being wonderful to work with, and especially Sarah Elder for the considerable work of putting the visuals of the exhibit together. What follows are some reflections on Friedman's work.

The counterintuitive and diverse titles of James Friedman's photographic projects tell a story all their own: "Self-Portraits with Jewish Nose Wandering in a Gentile World," "Hypersalivation," "Almost Never Before Seen Portraits of Remarkable People," "1,029, 398 Cigarettes," "Dogs Who've Licked Me," "My Face Looks Like An Ansel Adams Landscape." And many other magnificently odd titles! His photographs are, above all, about people and their emotions. The Holocaust is not his main theme, people are. And yet Jewishness, nomadism, displacement, and the Holocaust consistently return in Friedman's work. In "12 Nazi Concentration Camps," a parade of tourists interact with the spaces of trauma. Recorded with a large format 8 x 10 camera, these memory tourists in their bright colors often stare directly at us, making us

uncomfortable and curious all at once. In the 1980s when Friedman took these photographs, there was not yet a Holocaust tourism culture in the way it has subsequently become established. These photographs offer an inventive way of interacting with these fraught landscapes. The difference between the story told by photographs and the reality they supposedly depict can be seen in Friedman's work where the jarring juxtaposition between past and present manifests so potently. As his subjects stand, sit, and stare they are keenly aware of their locations and yet they are also some forty years removed from the trauma of the spaces of the 12 Nazi Concentration Camps.

An American, Ohio-based photographer, Friedman's experiences with antisemitism fueled his desire to travel to and record the experiences of other people who toured former Nazi concentration camps. Antisemitism and Jewishness shape much of his

work even though its themes vary widely. Friedman has taught photography at Santa Fe Community College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Antioch College, and Ohio State University. His photographic projects have been included in solo and group shows at the Skirball Museum, Cincinnati; the Maurtiz Gallery, Columbus; The National Exhibition Center, Canada; The Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe; The Visionary Art Museum, Maryland; and many other places as well. His work is included in photography collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Jewish Museum, New York; The University of Colorado Art Museum; and other collections. Articles about Friedman have appeared in such venues as *Art Forum*, *Afterimage*, *View Camera*, and *Arts Magazine*.



Mannequin of political prisoner, Fort Breendonck concentration camp, near Brussels, Belgium, 1981

"12 Nazi Concentration Camps" © James Friedman

I have been able to view “12 Nazi Concentration Camps” in multiple formats and each time I have a different experience. I first saw them online after being invited to discuss the series on a panel at Hebrew Union College along with Friedman and Gary Weissman, a fellow Holocaust Scholar. Then, I was able to spend some time in company of the images as carefully mounted and presented large photographs at the Hebrew Union College gallery. Finally, we brought them to the University of Illinois but, due to budgetary constraints, we projected them onto the walls of the Union Gallery here. The projected version heightened the sense that these images were doubly relics of the past: the 1940s past of the concentration camps themselves and the 1980s past of the moments of photographing. During the month long exhibit at UIUC the photos advanced through slide shows all day long and visitors could choose how to interact with them—one could watch one screen at a time like a slow moving

film or one could circle the gallery and view multiple screens. I had the impression that these tourists from the 1980s, many of them likely no longer alive, were watching us watching them. It was unnerving and very effective. Like Proust’s magic lantern, it allowed us to gaze at an ever-changing kaleidoscope.

One of the first, obvious but still shocking things one notices about Friedman’s photographs, are that they are in color. Some survivors, such as Jorge Semprun, have noticed the stark contrast between their memories, in color, and the images that circulate, largely in black and white well after the wide distribution of color film. Friedman has remarked that it is the saturated colors of his images that often irk viewers—as if it were not possible to take color photos in the 1980s, as if the sun were not allowed to shine between 1939 and 1945, as if the sky could not have been clear blue. For me, it was not so much the color that I found striking, but rather the direct address offered to the

viewer by many of the subjects—as they stare at us, it is so direct, it feels like a challenge. In the case of photography, there is always, as Roland Barthes so beautifully found, at once what is within the photograph and that which must necessarily be excluded from the frame. The photograph’s ability to represent, like any given space’s ability to bear witness, is also always circumscribed.

The landscapes in which traumatic events happened, or where perpetrators dreamed up violent scenarios, can bear only unstable witness. On the one hand, visible traces of the past remain; on the other hand, an inevitable covering up of these traces by the progress of the landscape as nature either reclaims it or human desires reshape and repurpose it occurs. Friedman’s photographs and the interactions they reveal between inert space and the living images of his subjects, remind us of the vitality of things, of their call to us to remember that remembering is a vital thing and that it never reaches conclusion.

See more of James Friedman's work here <http://www.jamesfriedmanphotographer.com>



German family, Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, near Hannover, Germany, 1981

“12 Nazi Concentration Camps” © James Friedman

# From Events in 2017-18 to Setting up the April 24th Fund: A Reflection on Continuing to Create Space for Armenian Studies through HGMS

By Helen Makhdoumian

I want to begin this blog post differently than previous ones that I've written regarding programming supported by the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies (HGMS) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

I will, of course, still write in detail about the wonderful campus visits we had this year from Khatchig Mouradian (Columbia), Diana Hambarzumyan (Yerevan State Linguistic University), and Victor Pambuccian (Arizona State) as well as other related events. However, to emphasize how a single event has the potential to produce lasting effects beyond sparking fascinating questions, fostering avenues for innovative research, and bringing together a campus community in positive ways, I want to share a brief story.

A few years ago, as a McNair Scholar at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah, I listened to a panel of graduate students discuss their experiences in academia.

Opportunities like these gave me hope for the possibility of being fortunate enough to continue to receive a higher education and invaluable insights that would help me further think through the questions I was asking about the Armenian diaspora and its memory work, the travels of Western Armenia and its potential vibrancy between two mountain ranges locally and across borders globally, and our ever-changing transnational community's beautiful artistic and literary production.

Still, with the daunting question in my mind as to whether a space would even welcome me to do just that, I could not have imagined that in the not too distant future, I would participate for the second time as a

panelist myself and champion another cohort of McNairians. Indeed, as I think about what I will tell these future graduate students about my journey, I can't help but smile.

Why? Well, it's been incredible (to say the least), and The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies (HGMS) has played an instrumental role in making it so! As an undergraduate, I had wonderful professors who encouraged me to design directed studies and research projects to pursue my inquiries. It was there that I started to believe in the potential to create spaces for Armenian Studies in unexpected places, and it was there that I started to learn the value of mentorship. And, it's been through HGMS that my faith in both of these things has skyrocketed!

In April 2016, HGMS organized a visit from Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, memoirist, and scholar Peter Balakian who delivered a CAS/MillerComm lecture titled "The Armenian Genocide, Poetry of Witness, and Postmemory." In April 2017, for the Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide Conference and Film Screening, HGMS was delighted to host a group of talented, sharp, and inspiring scholars and artists: Silvina Der-Meguerditchian, Nancy Kricorian, Scout Tufankjian, Talar Chahinian, and Myrna Douzjian. These are some of the events that HGMS has supported me and other graduate students in organizing over the years. Additionally, this year, as part of its commitment to offering an annual, on-campus Armenian Studies event in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, HGMS set up the April 24th Fund. <https://jewishculture.illinois.edu/giving/give>

From this trajectory of events, I have

learned that a workshop, lecture, or conference is more than just an opportunity to exchange knowledge, gain feedback, and engage the public. As the community of faculty and graduate students affiliated with HGMS has led me to see, an event is part of a larger way to "pay it forward." It is this message of paying it forward that I will carry with me and share with students, whether at the upcoming panel or in the classroom.

So, while I now turn to the spaces that wonderful guest lecturers activated this year at UIUC, I hope that this larger context also helps you see, as I do, the following events as more than just events.

For the HGMS Faculty Seminar Series, Khatchig Mouradian first gave a workshop titled "'The Very Limit of Our Endurance': Unarmed Resistance During the Armenian Genocide." Mouradian invited the audience to understand that a "perpetrator driven narrative" has traditionally framed studies of the Armenian Genocide. This emphasis, he argued, overlooks victims' voices and resistance efforts. He further suggested that in contrast, a shift in the discussion to unarmed resistance, such as humanitarian efforts against the will of authorities, allows for a more complex understanding of the catastrophe. For example, looking at this network of acts of resistance, including the formation of relief communities through churches and efforts to document refugees' stories and familial histories, underscores the importance of gender and class as lenses through which to analyze this period.

In the evening, Mouradian also delivered a lecture titled “Internment and Destruction: Concentration Camps During the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917.” Mouradian provided a nuanced account of the perpetrators’ process of removing populations out of their homes and the combination of circumstances and conditions that undergirded the genocidal project. Specifically, he discussed the administrative infrastructure and daily operations of concentration camps along the Euphrates River. The interdisciplinary community of HGMS faculty and graduate students had several questions for Mouradian, and he deftly responded, often by situating the history of the Armenian Genocide in relation to other case studies of mass violence and dispossession. Many of us in HGMS work comparatively within the larger umbrella of trauma and memory studies; thus, Mouradian’s careful, thoughtful connective gestures were well-received.

In this vein of comparison and connection, Mouradian’s lecture and workshop couldn’t have come at a better time. Previously, HGMS hosted an on-campus screening of the 2016 documentary *The Destruction of Memory*, which was followed by a Skype Q and A with director Tim Slade. I mention the documentary here because of a point that fellow HGMS graduate student Claire Baytas and I didn’t address in our article about the film. Towards the end of the documentary, interviewees connect the experiences of Armenian Genocide refugees with those of Syrian Civil War refugees. Both through his presentations and conversations with us afterwards, Mouradian helped us return to and refine questions about memory work that the documentary had prompted us to grapple with.

It wasn’t just through the study of history, though, that we mapped connections and charted comparisons. Indeed, this year, several events on literature and translation brought together diverse audiences and, perhaps, laid the foundations for future student work on campus.

In November, literary translator, writer, and professor Diana Hambardzumyan (Yerevan State Linguistic University) gave a presentation on modern Armenian literature. Specifically, Hambardzumyan discussed her own writing experiences, her translation of Kurt Vonnegut’s Armenian-themed *Bluebeard*, and Armenian American writers such as William Saroyan and Peter Najarian. We are deeply grateful for two of our wonderful community members, Tigran Hakobyan and Arpi Arakelyan, who generously arranged for Hambardzumyan to visit our campus. It was Arpi who first approached me about organizing this event, and the enthusiasm and energy she brought to the process still inspires me months later.

A lively conversation followed the presentation and as a graduate student instructor of literature, I especially loved watching undergraduate students pose complex and exigent questions. Hambardzumyan’s responses prompted audience members to reflect upon the following: what do we mean when we refer to “Armenian literature,” what might we include under that rubric, and what factors inform the rationales behind our selections? Another student asked whether the development of technology in Armenia has played a role in prompting youth to develop an interest in translating literature.

Hambardzumyan stressed that despite the proliferation of technological tools, it is still necessary to train

individuals to become good translators. She also emphasized both the need for and importance of translating literature from other languages into Armenian and vice versa.

Questions like these led me to view my own research interests from a different angle. That is, I had not thoroughly inquired before if and how literature produced by writers of Armenian descent in dispersion and in a myriad of languages has migrated into public and private spheres within a nation-state formation of Armenia. For me, then, one of the meaningful takeaways from Hambardzumyan’s visit was for those of us in the diaspora and those of us in the nation-state to ask ourselves, how have we come to understand (or misunderstand) one another through the circulation of our literatures? And, if our literatures are “stuck” in isolated sites, how do we create connective spokes so that, as I’ve written about in my own work, we “translate” our stories, lived conditions, and memoryscapes to one another and in so doing, better conceptualize the fabric of our transnational kinship?

Since Hambardzumyan’s visit, Assistant Professor Anush Tserunyan (Mathematics), my dear friend and Western-Eastern Armenian language ally on campus, has been a keen and willing interlocutor and has pushed me to keep asking questions along these routes. Indeed, it was Anush who first got the ball rolling for another event on literature and translation on campus.

Anush had invited Professor Victor Pambuccian (Arizona State) to give a lecture for the Logic Seminar that she organizes on campus and in the meantime, she introduced me to some of his translations (including the poetry of Vahe Godel, a Swiss-French writer of Armenian heritage). With Anush's encouragement, I asked Pambuccian if he would be interested in giving an informal talk while he visited campus, and we were thrilled when he said "yes." And, so, that's how we got a Romanian-born, Armenian Mathematics professor with a passion for translating poetry to discuss his translations of Romanian avant-garde poetry!

Pambuccian introduced an audience to three generations of poets, many of whom were of different ethnic backgrounds, wrote in languages other than Romanian, and worked outside the territory of Romania. We learned about poets whose works have regularly appeared in anthologies (such as Tristan Tzara and Paul Celan) alongside perhaps less-familiar poets (such as Nora Iuga and Mariana Marin). Pambuccian historicized the poets' work and their contributions to Dadaism, Symbolism, and Onirism. Additionally, Pambuccian read some of his translations, which generated a lively discussion about what we saw in the poems: negotiation of identity, rootlessness, and belonging; thick descriptions of landscape and place; and play with sound.

Despite humbly pointing out that he has not been trained in literary or translation studies, Pambuccian's informal talk sparked thoughtful questions from audience members. We came to see that Romanian avant-garde poetry remains a ripe site through which to return and complicate some of the theories many of us engage as students interested in

cosmopolitan, transnational, world, and comparative literatures. I'd like to also think that among the lasting impressions that both talks by Hambarzumyan and Pambuccian left on our campus is some inspiration in us to begin (or continue) our own journeys with translation.

The final literature- and translation-related event I want to highlight is an annual event organized by the students of the Armenian Association on campus: a candlelight vigil on April 24th to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. It's been my great pleasure to lead a literary reading as part of this event, which is open to the public. Some volunteer readers come prepared with their own literary selections but in the days leading up, I think critically about picking texts that help us make meaning of that day in relation to the world around us, the present "moment" in which we find ourselves. Last year, I picked poems and short passages of prose that would help us think about the past and our gathering in the context of what we were hearing about the Syrian Civil War, reading about refugee crises globally, and the land on which we were going to hold the then upcoming Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide Conference and Film Screening.

This year, as I watched individuals on campus ask "What's happening in Armenia?" hour-to-hour and as I saw the phrase "revolution" crop up in one news headline after another, I felt we needed to conclude the commemoration that evening with messages in literature about Spring (about change, resilience, upbuilding communities, and ushering in a bright future). Ultimately, I selected texts by the following writers (which we read in Armenian and English): Diana Der-

Hovanesian, Micheline Aharonian Marcom, Michael Arlen, Peter Balakian, Arto Vaun, Yeghishe Charents, and Vahan Tekeyan. Dilara Caliskan also brought and read from an English translation of Zabel Yesayan's prose, and Albert Tamazyan recited poetry by Paruyr Sevag.

So, what's next for HGMS and me? I'll definitely continue to read, think, and write a lot in this next stage of my graduate education (and afterwards, of course). HGMS will continue to work with amazing people who also believe in creating spaces for Armenian Studies events on campus. And, as I said earlier, an event is never just an event. Through it all, I know that I'll continue to learn how to become a great mentor and "pay it forward." Դէպի առաջ: Onward we go!

Helen Makhdoumian is pursuing her Ph.D. through English and HGMS. She has been a very active graduate student in HGMS who has spearheaded many of our events and she served as the co-organizer of the Future of Trauma and Memory Studies reading group as well as a co-organizer of the HGMS graduate student conference. She works comparatively on Armenian American, Arab American, and American Indian literatures and focuses on representations of collective violence and trauma, memory, and migration.



# Dialogue: A Polish-Jewish Film Series screens *Shimon's Returns*

By Lizy Mostowski

I created *Dialogue: A Polish-Jewish Film Series* about a year ago with the intention of starting a forum for cross-cultural dialogue around Polish-Jewish issues that extend well beyond the scope of this particular cultural space. The goal of the Series is to breakdown perceived binaries between “Polish” and “Jewish” cultures through dialogue and discussion about a film. I was inspired by Professor Erica Lehrer’s exhibition *Souvenir, Talisman, Toy* put on at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, Poland in 2013 where Prof. Lehrer attempted to create cross-cultural dialogue through her exhibition featuring wooden figurines of Jews carved by Poles after the Second World War. Each of my screenings begins with a film (sometimes a particularly controversial film) on a Polish-Jewish topic and is followed by a discussion led by graduate students specializing in the area. This academic year, Diana Sacilowski and I have curated the lineup of films and together we introduce and discuss the films with participants. In past semesters, we have screened films like *Aftermath* (2012), *Ida* (2013), *Austeria* (1982), and *Little Rose* (2010).

Our first screening this semester was the largely independently produced documentary film entitled *Shimon's Returns* (2014). The film is directed by US-based Polish-Jewish filmmakers Katka Reszke and

Slawomir Grunberg—both of whom have been vital in many grassroots Jewish revival efforts in Poland. The film allows a glimpse into the life of a man named Shimon Redlich, an Israeli historian and child Holocaust survivor. In 1948—before emigrating to Israel, Shimon was cast in *Unzere Kinder*—Poland’s last ever Yiddish feature film. In four languages—English, Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew—Shimon guides viewers through his story and his recurrent visits to contemporary Poland and Ukraine.

Diana introduced the film, suggesting that, “various critics have noted, despite the dark history the film contends with and how charged the topic of the Holocaust is in this region of the world as of late, particularly regarding issues of complicity and who helped and who participated, the documentary itself is fairly uplifting.”

The film seems to have been created to speak to a North American audience as Shimon narrates to the camera only in English while his interactions with others throughout the documentary occur predominantly in Polish and Hebrew. The film complicates common stereotypes around Polish-Jewish relations after the Holocaust. As one participant noted in the post-film discussion, it is as though there is a dramatically swinging pendulum between scenes that illustrate pro-Polish and anti-Polish sentiments in Shimon’s

interactions and experiences in his returns to Poland throughout the documentary. For example, in one scene Shimon approaches a right-wing group who are dressed in Nazi uniforms in Lwow (which was a part of Poland before the Second World War), yet instead of overtly confronting them, Shimon climbs up on a Nazi motorcycle and pretends to ride it. In another scene, Shimon meets his childhood sweetheart in Łódź, where they ride in a cycle-rickshaw and reminisce about their youth in the city, organically alternating between Polish and Hebrew. In this way, the film may seem to reinforce preconceived stereotypes that a North American viewer might carry with them before seeing the film, such as a notion that all Poles are anti-Semitic because of the complicity of some Poles in the Holocaust or that Poland was a thriving (Yiddish) Jewish homeland before the Holocaust (think of the nostalgia produced by the American film *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971)), but in fact, the film reveals the complex texture of Shimon’s identity and relationship with Poland, Poles, and the past. *Shimon's Returns* thereby shows that Polish-Jewish identity and Polish-Jewish relations after the Holocaust are likewise more nuanced and complex than many anticipate before viewing the film.

It is important to note that *Shimon's Returns* was made in 2014, before the introduction of the recent law which seeks to criminalize discourse on Polish complicity in the Holocaust. "On the one hand, this film might seem like it's in line with new political discourse focusing on Polish heroism over complicity. But the story is far more complicated than that," Diana rightly highlighted in her introduction to the film. In its complexity, *Shimon's Returns* opens up a space for dialogue between perceived cultural boundaries that linger from the anti-Semitic laws of the Second World War and the Anti-Semitic Campaign of 1968. In our discussion we considered how such dialogue-initiating films may be at risk in light of the new policies implemented by Poland's right-wing government and the extreme responses to them from the Jewish right-wing.

Lizy Mostowski is a graduate student in the Comparative and World Literature Department. She holds BA and MA degrees in English Literature from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her master's thesis entitled

"Postmemory in Canadian Jewish Memoirs: Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and Jonathan Garfinkel's *Ambivalence: Adventures in Israel and Palestine*" was an examination of how postmemory figures into two contemporary Canadian Jewish memoirs, affecting the writer's relation to their Jewishness, the Holocaust, their home country of Canada, and the State of Israel as a Jewish homeland. Her thesis garnered a fellowship from Concordia's Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, as well as the English Department's Mervin Butovsky Memorial Scholarship. In 2015, she interned at POLIN Museum of the History of the Polish Jews, where she collected the oral histories of witnesses to the events of March of 1968. She was named John Klier Scholar in the Program in Jewish Culture & Society in 2017. She is interested in Polish-Jewish literature, culture, and identity, particularly after March of 1968. This past summer she studied Yiddish in Warsaw at the Centrum Kultury Jidysz thanks to a Karasik Scholarship from the Program in Jewish Culture & Society.



# Fall 2018 Jewish Studies Courses

**ANTH 290/JS 290: JEWISH CULTURES OF THE WORLD**

Pnina Motzafi-Haller

**CWL 571: LITERATURE, VIOLENCE, AND THE ARCHIVE**

Harriet Murav

**GCL 143: MAPPING INEQUALITIES**

Judith Pinter

**HEBR 201: ELEMENTARY MODERN HEBREW I**

Rabbi Efrat Rotem

**HIST 335/JS335: MIDDLE EAST 1566-1914**

Ken Cuno

**HIST 355/JS355: SOVIET JEWISH HISTORY**

Eugene Avrutin

**HIST 472: IMMIGRANT AMERICA**

Dorothee Schneider

**HIST 495/498A: FAMILY IN HISTORY**

Ken Cuno

**JS 201/REL 212: HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM**

Bruce Rosenstock

**LLS 473/CHLH473/SOC473/SOCW473: IMMIGRATION, HEALTH & SOCIETY**

Edna Viruell-Fuentes

**PS 152/SAME 152: THE NEW MIDDLE EAST**

Avital Livny

**REL 101/CWL 111/ENGL 114: BIBLE AS LITERATURE**

Richard Layton

**REL 108/ANTH 108/JS108/PHIL 108/SOC 108: RELIGION & SOCIETY IN WEST I**

Bruce Rosenstock

**REL 110/PHIL110: WORLD RELIGIONS**

Richard Layton

**REL120/HIST168/JS120: A HISTORY OF JUDAISM**

Dov Weiss

**REL 442/HIST432/JS442: HISTORY OF EARLY JUDAISM**

Dov Weiss

**SOC 225: RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Ghassan Moussawi

**SOCW 300: DIVERSITY: IDENTITIES & ISSUES**

J. Carter-Black

# Last Year's Events

## **Monday, September 11**

*The Crisis of the Individual and the Community in Kibbutz Narrative*

Ranen Omer-Sherman, University of Louisville

## **Tuesday, September 19**

Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn- *The Internationale: Dialectical Polyglott Klezmer Cabaret*

Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture

## **Wednesday, September 27**

*"Intoxications of the Blood": Ritual Murder and Other Fantasies of the Savage Self in Modern Central Europe*

Scott Spector, University of Michigan  
Lorelei Rosenthal and Family Endowment Fund  
Jewish Studies Workshop, *Sigmund Freud Between 'Jewish Science' and Humanism*

## **Monday, October 2**

*Ruin the Sacred Truth: The Problem of the Torah for Religion and Literature*

Seth Sanders, University of California, Davis  
Samuel and Sheila Goldberg Lectureship Fund

## **Monday, October 9**

HGMS screening-*The Destruction of Memory*  
Filmmaker Tim Slade Skyping in for Q & A

## **October 16-18**

Dorit Rabinyan  
Monday, October 16 - An Evening With Dorit  
Tuesday, October 17 - Film screening at Hillel

## **Monday, October 30**

*The Use of Narrative in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*

Tim Wedig, University of Illinois  
HGMS Faculty Seminar

## **Monday, November 6**

James Friedman's "12 Nazi Concentration Camps"

Greenfield Lynch event

Panel discussion with James Friedman, Gary Weissman, and Brett Kaplan

Illini Union art gallery - projected images from 12 Nazi Concentration Camps

## **Thursday, November 9**

*Illustrating History: Maus, Memory, and Me*  
Mara Thacker, University of Illinois  
In conjunction with IPRH

## **Monday, November 13**

*Pushkin in Jewish Culture*  
Sara Feldman, University of Illinois

## **Wednesday, November 29**

*Potential History of the Archive: The Micro Study of a Macro Institution*  
Ariella Azoulay, Brown University  
MillerComm  
Spurlock Museum

## **Monday, December 4**

*Where was God?*  
Peter Fritzsche, University of Illinois  
HGMS faculty seminar

## **Thursday, January 25**

*Internment and Destruction: Concentration Camps During the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*  
Khatchig Mouradian, Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia University

## **Thursday, February 1**

Gene Avrutin book launch, *The Velizh Affair*  
The Humanities Institute at UIC

## Last Year's Events continued

### Monday, February 12

*Public Memory Underground: Photographs of the 1953 Worker's Uprising in East Germany*

Anke Pinkert, German, UIUC  
HGMS Faculty Workshop

### Tuesday, February 20

*Convergence: Spirituals from the Shtetl. Davening from the Delta.*

Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell, Yiddish singer  
MillerComm

### Monday, March 5

Michael Shapiro book talk, *Wrestling with Shylock: Jewish Responses to the Merchant of Venice*

### Friday, March 9

*The Promise of Judicial Appointments in the Promised Land: Law and Politics in the Formation of the Israeli Judiciary*

Amnon Reichman, University of Haifa  
Program in Constitutional Theory, History, and Law and Israel Studies Project

### Thursday, March 29

New Budapest Orpheum Society  
MillerComm

### Friday, April 6

HGMS Grad Student Conference

### Monday, April 9

*Jews for Jihad? Jewish Citizens in an Islamic Empire*

Julia Cohen, Vanderbilt University  
Oscar and Rose A. Einhorn Fund  
Lucy Ellis lounge

Jewish Studies Workshop – *The Past as a Foreign Country: Sephardi Jews and the Spanish Past*

### Monday, April 16

*In the Shadow of Benya Krik? Jews, the Street, and Socialism in 1920s Odessa*

Mark Steinberg, University of Illinois  
Jewish Studies Workshop

### Monday, April 23

Book launch for Sayed Kashua's *Track Changes*

### Tuesday, April 24

Book launch for Rachel Harris' *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema*

### Wednesday, April 25

Book launch for Lilya Kaganovsky's *The Voice of Technology: Soviet Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1928-1935* and Eric Calderwood's *Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture*

### Film Series

*Yiddish and Hebrew* film series organized by Sara Feldman

October 25 *The Singing Blacksmith*

November 1 *Arab Labor and The Writer*

December 6 *The Wandering Jew*

April 25 *The Dybbuk*

*Dialogue: A Polish-Jewish Film Series* organized by Lizy Mostowski

September 28 *Korczak*

October 26 *Aftermath*

November 30 *The Return*

February 22 *Shimon's Returns*

March 28 *Border Street*

April 19 *Scandal in Ivansk*

# The Program & Jewish Culture & Society: Core Faculty

**Eugene M. Avrutin** Associate Professor of History and Tobor Family Scholar in the Program in Jewish Culture and Society, presented “A Tale of Two Murders: The Velizh and Beilis Blood Libel Cases” at Miami University of Ohio and participated in the American Academy for Jewish Research Associate Professor Seminar at Brown University. His book, *The Velizh Affair: Blood Libel in a Russian Town*, appeared with Oxford University Press. Together with Elissa Bemporad (Professor of History at CUNY), he is editing the collection, *Pogroms: A Documentary History*, for which they received a major grant from the Blavatnik Foundation.

**Dale M. Bauer** is a Professor of English at UIUC, and she has also taught at UW-Madison, U Kentucky, and Miami University. She has written three books: on Bakhtin and feminism, Edith Wharton's politics, and, most recently, on *Sex Expression and American Women Writers, 1860-1940* (UNC Press, 2009). Bauer is the editor of the *Cambridge History of American Women's Literature* (2012). Her current project is on U.S. women's serial fiction - from E.D.E.N. Southworth and Ann Stephens to Laura Jean Libbey and Mrs. Alex McVeigh Miller.

**Eric Calderwood** is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature. His research explores the political uses of the past in modern Mediterranean culture. He is particularly interested in the cultural memory of al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Iberia), which has served diverse and contradictory projects in several Mediterranean contexts, including Spain, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Palestine. He is also interested in the cultural production of the Sephardic diaspora – and especially literature written by North African Jews living under Spanish and French colonial rule. Eric is the author of *Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2018) and *The Invention of al-Andalus* forthcoming with Harvard. Eric was awarded the Unit for Criticism Junior Faculty Fellowship and the Conrad Humanities Award.

**Virginia R. Dominguez** is the Edward William and Jane Marr Gutgsell Professor of Anthropology (and member of the Jewish Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Global Studies, and Caribbean Studies faculty). She is also Co-Founder and Consulting Director of the International Forum for U.S. Studies. A political and legal anthropologist, she has served as president of the American Anthropological Association. Her most recent books are *America Observed: On an International Anthropology of the United States*, coedited with Jasmin Habib (Berghahn Books, January 2017) and *Global Perspectives on the U.S.*, coedited with Jane Desmond (U of Illinois Press, Spring 2017). She has guest-edited a 2018 issue of *RIAS* (the International American Studies Association's journal) on *Walls, Material and Rhetorical: Past and Present*, a multidisciplinary and multi-country collection of essays “inspired” by Donald Trump's plan to build a tall wall separating Mexico from the U.S.

**Dara E. Goldman** is an Associate Professor of Spanish, specializing in contemporary Caribbean and Latin American literatures and cultures, gender and sexualities studies and cultural studies. She is the author of *Out of Bounds: Islands and the Demarcation of Identity in the Hispanic Caribbean* (Bucknell Univ. Press, 2008) and is currently completing a project on how recent Cuban cultural production challenges dominant depictions of the island as a land frozen in time, available for touristic consumption, or as a model of anti-imperial resilience. The book analyzes literature, film, and music that challenges such depictions, unearthing the conditions they mask. She has also published articles on how Caribbean identities are represented in contemporary literature and film, on gender in Caribbean music, and on Jewish cultural production. Professor Goldman has served as Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Lemann Institute for Brazilian Studies and currently chairs the Global Diaspora and Migration Initiative. She also holds appointments as Affiliate Faculty in several campus units, including Comparative and World Literatures, Center for Global Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, Latina/Latino Studies and the Unit for Criticism and Interpretative Theory. Dara will take over as Director of the Program in August. She has been on the Jewish Studies Executive Committee for many years and has been a very active member of the program since joining the Illinois faculty in 1999.

# The Program in Jewish Culture & Society: Core Faculty

**Rachel S. Harris** is Associate Professor in Comparative and World Literature focusing on Israeli literature and culture. She is author of *An Ideological Death: Suicide in Israeli Literature* (Northwestern UP, 2014) and *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema* (Wayne State Press, 2017). She co-edited *Narratives of Dissent: War in Israeli Arts and Culture* (Wayne State Press, 2012) with Ranen Omer-Sherman and the forthcoming *Casting a Giant Shadow: The Transnational Shaping of Israeli Cinema*. Currently, she is editing *Teaching the Arab Israeli Conflict in the College Classroom*, a pedagogical guide. Her latest research focuses on terrorism in literature and cinema.

**Brett Ashley Kaplan** will continue to direct the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies. Her first books, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (2007) and *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory* (2011), examine the Shoah's intersections with art and space; she published *Jewish Anxiety in the Novels of Philip Roth* (2015) and is working on a project about the resonances and tensions between Jewishness and Blackness in contemporary visual and performance art. This year she published the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* entry on Philip Roth and an article about Roth for [The Conversation](#) as well as an essay for *Shofar* and other pieces.

**Harriet Murav** is Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature and editor of *Slavic Review*. Her co-translation from the Yiddish, with Sasha Sanderovich, of *Judgment*, by David Bergelson was published by Northwestern Press in the fall of 2017. Indiana University Press published *David Bergelson's Strange New World: Untimeliness and Futurity* in 2018. An Arnold O. Beckman Award from our campus Research Board funded the first phase of her new project, *Archive of Violence; Literature, History, and the Pogroms of the Russian Revolutions*. Together with Gene Avrutin, Dana Rabin, and other colleagues, she has received funding from IPRH for a research cluster on Russian and East European Jewish culture which resulted in a scintillating conference for junior scholars.

**Dana Rabin's** book, *Britain and its Internal Others, 1750-1800: Under Rule of Law*, was published in October 2017 by Manchester University Press in its series *Studies in Imperialism*. She was promoted to full professor. In recognition of her achievements in research she was named Lynn M. Martin Professorial Scholar for 2018-2021. She delivered papers at the University of Western Ontario and at the KU Leuven. The highlight of the year was the dissertation jury in which she participated also at the KU Leuven.

**Bruce Rosenstock** is Professor of Religion who has published *Transfinite Life: Oskar Goldberg and the Vitalist Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017) and many other works. He presented "Franz Rosenzweig and Markus Gabriel's New Realism: toward a Philosophy of Revelation," at "Into Life: Rosenzweig on Knowledge, Aesthetics, and Politics," an international conference organized by the Martin Buber Society of Fellows and the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center at the Hebrew University, together with the Collaborative Research Center *Episteme in Motion* at the Department of Philosophy and Humanities of the Freie Universität Berlin.

**Dov Weiss** is an Associate Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion. Specializing in the history of Jewish biblical interpretation and rabbinic theology, Dov's first book, *Pious Irreverence: Confronting God in Rabbinic Judaism* (University of Pennsylvania Press), won the 2017 National Jewish Book Award in the category of Scholarship.

# Jewish Culture & Society and Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies Affiliated Faculty

Dara Goldman, Director (as of August 16, 2018)  
Brett Kaplan, Director (2015-2018)  
Bruce Rosenstock, Hebrew Program Director  
Brett Kaplan, Director of Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies

Eugene Avrutin\*+ (History): Associate Professor of Modern European Jewish History and Tobor Family Scholar of Jewish Culture and Society  
Luke Batten+ (Art & Design): Photography  
Dale Bauer\* (English): American Women's Literature  
Liza Berdychevsky (Recreation, Sport & Tourism): Gender & Tourism; Jewish Tourism  
Edward Bruner (Anthropology): Anthropology of Tourism; Jewish Travel  
Jodi A. Byrd+ (English): Indigenous Critical Theory; Settler Colonial Studies; Postcolonial Literatures  
Eric Calderwood \* (Comparative Literature): North African Literature and Film; Sephardic Diaspora  
Tamara Chaplin+ (History): Histories of Gender and Sexuality; Media History; Queer Theory  
Kenneth Cuno (History): History of the Middle East; Egypt; Palestinian history  
Virginia Dominguez\* (Anthropology): Anthropology of Peoplehood; Israel  
Peter Fritzsche+ (History): Twentieth-Century German History; Third Reich  
George Gasyna (Slavic): Polish Literature; Polish-Jewish Relations  
Rebecca Ginsburg+ (Landscape Architecture): Architectural History; Carceral Landscapes; Atlantic Slavery  
Dara Goldman\* (Spanish): Hispanic Caribbean; Jews of the Caribbean  
Jessica Greenberg (Anthropology): Democracy; Postsocialism; Youth Movements  
Heather Grossman+ (Architecture): Memory and Architecture, Encounters Between Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures of the "Global" Medieval World  
James Hansen (English): British/Irish Modernism; Frankfurt School  
Rachel Harris\* (Comparative Literature): Hebrew Literature; Israel Cultural Studies  
Jamie L. Jones+ (English): Environmental Humanities; American Literature; American Art; Visual Culture  
Lilya Kaganovsky (Comparative Literature): Soviet Culture; Literature and Film; Gender Studies; Sound Studies  
Brett Kaplan\*+ (Comparative Literature): Holocaust Representation in Art and Literature, Modern Jewish Literature  
Lori Kendall+ (Library & Information Science): Personal Archiving; Online Community and Identity  
William Kinderman+ (Music): Music history; Piano Performance; Artistic Creativity; Beethoven; Wagner  
Wynne Korr (Social Work): Mental Health Policy; Social Work Education  
Michele Koven+ (Communication): The Role of Culture in Verbal Interaction; Sociolinguistics; Oral Narrative  
Eduardo Ledesma+ (Spanish): 20th and 21st century Latin American (including Brazil) and Iberian Literature and Film  
Harry Liebersohn (History): European Intellectual History  
Avital Livny+ (Political Science): Middle East, Comparative Politics, Identity Politics, Turkey  
Benjamin Lough (Social Work): Social Welfare Policies; Jewish Philanthropy  
Harriet Murav\*+ (Comparative Literature): Russian- and Soviet-Jewish Writing; Yiddish  
Cary Nelson+ (English): Modern American Poetry; Poetics of Anti-Semitism  
Carl Niekerk (German): German Cultural History; Vienna 1900  
David O'Brien+ (French & Italian): War Memories; Napoleon and Memory; Visual Culture and Memory  
Ned O'Gorman+ (Communication): History of Rhetoric; Cold War; Rhetorical and Political Theory  
Anka Pinkert+ (German): Modern German Culture; Memory and Affect; Postcommunist Transnational Studies  
Gary Porton (Religion): Rabbinics; Judaism in Late Antiquity (emeritus)  
Dana Rabin\* (History): Early Modern British History; Minorities in British History  
Bruce Rosenstock\*+ (Religion): Jewish Thought; Messianism in the Jewish Tradition  
Jacqueline Ross (Law): Comparative Law; Criminal Law  
Richard Ross (Law and History): Comparative Legal History; Legal Pluralism; Christian Hebraism  
Emanuel Rota+ (Italian): European Intellectual History; Fascism  
Sandra Ruiz+ (Latina/Latino Studies): Gender; Sexuality & Queer Studies; Postcolonial Studies  
Mahir Saul (Anthropology): West Africa; Sepharad  
Michael Shapiro (English): Shakespeare and the Jews (emeritus)  
Marek Sroka (Library): Jewish Studies in Eastern Europe  
Mara Wade+ (German): Early Modern German Literature  
Tim Wedig+ (Global Studies): Humanitarian Intervention; Conflict Prevention and Resolution; Rwanda  
Terri Weissman (Art History): History of Photography  
Dov Weiss\* (Religion): Biblical Interpretation; Rabbinic Literature; Jewish Thought  
Lesley Wexler+ (Law): International Humanitarian Law; Human Rights Law, and Sex Discrimination  
David Wright (English): African-American Literature; Contemporary American Literature; Fiction



# Endowments

## **Oscar and Rose Einhorn Fund**

Supports a Biennial Lecture

## **Ronald Filler Endowment Fund**

Supports a Scholarship for a Jewish Studies Minor or Major

## **Gendell Family and Shiner Family Fund**

Supports a Graduate Student Fellowship

## **Samuel and Sheila Goldberg Lectureship Fund**

Supports a Biennial Lecture

## **Greenfield/Lynch Lecture Series**

Supports an annual event in conjunction with the Department of English

## **Karasik Scholarship Fund**

Supports Scholarship and Other Program Needs

## **Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture Fund**

Supports an Annual Visiting Scholar

## **Vivian Marcus Memorial Lecture Fund**

Supports a Biennial Lecture

## **Gary Porton Fund**

Supports the Research of a Scholar of Judaism in the Department of Religion

## **Rosenthal Family Endowment**

Supports a Biennial Lecture in German and Hasburg Jewish Studies

## **Tobor Family Endowed Professorship in Jewish Studies Fund**

Supports the Research of a Scholar of European-Jewish History in the Department of History

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We are so grateful to all who donate to the program! Your support is crucial for all of the many events that we host each year. If you would like to know how you can help, please visit our website <https://jewishculture.illinois.edu/giving>. We are also delighted to welcome Megan Wolf, the new LAS Director of Development for Jewish Studies. You can reach out to Megan by calling 217-333-7108 or emailing her at [meganw@illinois.edu](mailto:meganw@illinois.edu). Megan will be traveling to meet with supporters and may be in your neighborhood soon! Your support enables the program's continued excellence.

