

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

2022-2023
Annual Report



Northwestern

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

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Cover: an illustration of a Jewish wedding procession from Paul Christian Kirchner's *Jüdisches Ceremoniel* (1726), a book that explains many Jewish customs, rituals, and beliefs. Kirchner's book features in Paul Feller's dissertation research (see pg. 6).

Northwestern

Crown Family Center for
Jewish and Israel Studies

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends: Although 2022-23 was in some respects a transitional year, with me serving as Interim Director, a great deal was accomplished.

Our faculty continues to be productive in publishing and stimulating in the classroom. Guy Ehrlich's book manuscript, *The Empty Places of Yehudit Hendel*, received the Yaacov Bahat Prize for Best Original Scholarly Book Manuscript in Hebrew (given by Haifa University Press). Ronit Alexander and Hanna Tzucker Seltzer have joined together to produce strong enrollments in Hebrew instruction.

Thanks to Sarah Cushman, Danny M. Cohen, Ben Frommer, Stefan Ionescu, Phyllis Lassner, and Anna Parkinson, the Crown Center continues to occupy a commanding position in Holocaust research and education. I should also note that Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, our specialist on Jewish communities in Eastern and Central Europe, was awarded the NADAV

“I am proud to say that our courses on the history of the Middle East and contemporary Israeli culture are designed to appeal to all students, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.”

Kenneth Seeskin

foundation's three-year grant at the same time that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation banned him from entering the country and included him in its *persona non grata* list for his active defense of Ukraine and sharp critique of Russian aggression.

Shira Schwartz, of Syracuse University, was hired as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and will join the Jewish Studies faculty beginning in fall, 2023. Shira specializes in late antique rabbinic and contemporary Orthodox and ex-Orthodox Judaism, comparative forms of religious exit, and queer/trans religious lives. She will be a welcome addition to our distinguished list of faculty.

This year, our public lectures and programs attracted large and attentive audiences. We hosted

an international conference on prominent Israeli author S. Y. Agnon in the fall. In the spring, the annual Vogel Lecture covered the Jewish aspects of Freud's thought, while the Klutznick lecture dealt with the Hasidic community in Kiryas Joel, New York.

Anyone who has been following the current climate on college campuses can attest that the teaching of Jewish Studies and Israel Studies has become much more challenging than it was when the Program was founded in 1985. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict has led to deep divisions among the student body, and stereotyping and inflammatory rhetoric have become all too common. As scholars, it is our job to disregard stereotypes and base our opinions on established facts and reasoned argument. I am proud to say that our courses on the history of the Middle East and contemporary Israeli culture are designed to appeal to all students, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation. It is our hope that over time, teaching and research will do away with prejudice and intolerance so that genuine dialogue can take place.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ken Seeskin".

Kenneth Seeskin
Interim Director

2022-2023 EVENTS



Wendy Zierler, David Roskies and Guy Ehrlich



Robert Alter and Barry Wimpfheimer



Haim Weiss, Nitza Ben-Dov and David Roskies

S.Y. Agnon's (Frustrated) Love Stories

A Conference Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of *At the Handles of the Lock*

S.Y. Agnon (1888-1970) was one of the foremost authors of modern Hebrew literature. In 1966, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first edition of Agnon's *Al kappot hamán'ul* (lit. "at the handles of the lock") in 2022, the Crown Family Center partnered with *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* and

Jerusalem's Agnon House on a scholarly conference titled "S.Y. Agnon's (Frustrated) Love Stories." Thirteen scholars from Canada, Israel, and the United States drafted original papers, which were presented on November 6-7, 2022. The keynote address was delivered by Robert Alter, Emeritus Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at University of California, Berkeley (see Renée and Lester Crown Speaker Series, following). Many of the drafted papers will appear in print in a special double issue in *Prooftexts'* 41st volume in 2024.

Renée and Lester Crown Speaker Series

"S.Y. Agnon and Gustave Flaubert: Hebraizing a French Master"

On November 6, 2022, Robert Alter, Emeritus Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, spoke about the influence of Gustav Flaubert on the writing style of S.Y. Agnon. Focusing on three examples, Alter showed that the interplay between narration and character development in Agnon's *A Simple Story* betrays a distinctly Flaubertian quality, particularly around the use of free indirect discourse.

Israel 2023: Judicial Reform or Coup D'état?

On March 12, 2023, three speakers joined us on a Zoom panel to discuss the proposed Israeli judicial reforms and the mass protests they have triggered. Sawsan Zaher, Palestinian human rights lawyer, Orly Noy, journalist and political activist, and Netta Amar-Shiff, human rights lawyer, explained the new proposals and their risks from civil, social, and political points of view. They discussed the protest movement that has grown in Israel, its weekly demonstrations, and the blind spots of this protest. A vigorous Q&A session followed the panel.

2022-2023 EVENTS



Hanna Tzucker Seltzer, Kenneth Seeskin, and Naomi Seidman

Faculty and graduate student colloquia

**“Nine Quarters of Jerusalem: A New Biography of an Old City”:
A conversation with author
Matthew Teller**

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Moderated by Professor Hanna Tzucker Seltzer, Jewish Studies and Middle East and North African Languages Programs, Northwestern University

**“Re-Reading Derrida in Algeria:
Jews, Christianity, Decolonization”
Friday, April 21, 2023**

Professor Adam Stern,
University of Wisconsin

**“Jews and Muslims as Legal Fictions
in Premodern Spain: A Legacy of
Racial Discrimination”
Wednesday, May 10, 2023**

Rodrigo Garcia-Velasco, Sava Ranisavljevic
Postdoctoral Fellow, Northwestern University

The Manfred H. Vogel Lecture in Judaic Studies

**“The Freudian Lullaby Contest:
How the Yiddish Press Covered
Psychoanalysis”**

Naomi Seidman, Chancellor Jackman Professor of the Arts in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto, presented this year’s Manfred H. Vogel Lecture in Judaic Studies on April 27.

Seidman discussed the influence of Sigmund Freud on the Yiddish Press in the first decades of the 20th century. She opened with a fascinating review of a lullaby competition that took place in *The Forward* newspaper and revealed the deep and broad impact of psychoanalysis on Yiddish writers and scholars at the time.



Matthew Teller



Naomi Seidman

As she examined the relationships between Freud and Jewish writers, Seidman also exposed the psychoanalytic patterns in the Yiddish press of the time by analyzing the complexes of pride and shame manifested in the reports and articles in the Jewish newspapers.

Seidman concluded by sharing a moving story about a meeting between the poet Y.L. Teller and Freud in 1937, where Freud — sick, old, and disillusioned by the rise of Nazism — sees himself in the Yiddish writers and speakers, his fellow brothers.

The Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization

“American Shtetl: The Intriguing Story of Kiryas Joel, a Booming Hasidic Town in Suburban New York”

This year’s Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick lecture was presented on May 16 by Nomi Stolzenberg and David Myers, who focused on their research and recent book *American Shtetl: The Intriguing Story of Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York*.

After providing background on life in Kiryas Joel and the history of Satmar Hasidism, Stolzenberg and Myers explained the evolution of Kiryas Joel as an official municipality with its own elected local government. They detailed how legal and political battles defined and even strengthened the community, whose success has coincided with the rise of political conservatism and multiculturalism in American society over the past few decades.



David Myers

Nomi M. Stolzenberg is the Nathan and Lilly Shapell Chair at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. David N. Myers is a Distinguished Professor of History and Sady and Ludwig Kahn Chair in Jewish History at University of California, Los Angeles.

Cosponsored by Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago.



Kenneth Seeskin and Nomi Stolzenberg



Ariel Weiner and Noah Marcus

The First Annual Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster Symposium

On May 31, the Crown Center hosted the First Annual Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster Symposium. Organized by cluster graduate coordinator Liza Bernstein and cluster faculty director Benjamin Frommer, this year’s symposium featured presentations by five students representing five different departments of the university (Comparative Literature, History, Musicology, Slavic, and Theatre). The students delivered papers on their research, received feedback from the faculty discussants Professors Hanna Tzucker Seltzer and Frommer, then engaged in a lively discussion of the many connections between their work in the field of Jewish Studies. The papers and presentations were:

Savoy Curry, History “Investigating Interfaith Sexual Relationships in Medieval Municipal Archives”

Paul G. Feller-Simmons, Musicology “Handel’s Esther, Opera Seria Contrafacts, and Eighteenth-Century Dutch-Jewish Cosmopolitanism”

Ariel Weiner, Comparative Literary Studies “The Buber-Rosenzweig Bible: A Modernist Translation”

Anastasiia Simferovska, Slavic Languages and Literatures

“The Holocaust Text in Eastern Europe: Migrating Images, Contested Narratives, Shifting Landscapes”

Noah Marcus, Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama “Seeing the Nation Through the Other: Fiddling on Japanese Roofs”



Vanda Rajcan and Anastasiia Simferovska

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Undergraduate News

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2023 GRADUATES



ANNIE EPSTEIN,
Jewish Studies Minor
(Medill '23)

Annie Epstein graduated with a BS in Journalism along with minors in Jewish Studies and Psychology.

“ I took Hebrew my freshman year and decided to continue with the Jewish Studies minor, taking classes about the intersection between Judaism, race and racism, Israel, and religion. My love for Judaism extended beyond the classroom; I served as the president of Northwestern Hillel and was deeply involved. I now work at Hillel International as the grants and foundation management associate. I am excited to continue my involvement in the Jewish world.”



TOMER CHERKI,
Jewish Studies Major
with Departmental Honors
(Weinberg '23)

Tomer Cherki graduated with interdisciplinary departmental honors in Jewish Studies and Comparative Literary Studies as well as departmental honors in Philosophy. His honors thesis was titled “Setting Up the Punchline: Exploring the Dark Humor of *Avimelech Goes Up by a Whirlwind to the Heavens* in Translation.”

For the thesis project, Cherki translated the first part of the novel *Avimelech Goes Up by a Whirlwind into Heaven* from Hebrew to English. He then wrote a critical introduction to the translation, placing the novel in its historical context and explaining his decisions as a translator through the lens of translation theory. He worked closely with Professor Rebecca Johnson and Professor Hanna Tzucker-Seltzer, who co-advised him on his ambitious and superbly executed thesis project.

“ I loved being a Jewish Studies major because it gave me the opportunity to explore Judaism academically from a variety of different perspectives (historical, cultural, religious, literary). I had a fantastic experience taking classes with Hanna Tzucker Seltzer, Claire Sufrin, Barry Wimpfheimer, Ben Frommer, Ken Seeskin, and Dana Mihailescu. The department helped me explore the ways in which my other academic interests intersected with Jewish history and philosophy. Now that I have graduated, I am pursuing an MA in philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, after which I intend to apply for a PhD in philosophy, with a specialization in Jewish thought and the philosophy of religion. Ultimately, I hope to become an educator engaged in the highest levels of intellectual discourse.”



JILL STACEY HARRIS PRIZE IN JEWISH STUDIES

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies awarded this year's Jill Stacey Harris Prize in Jewish Studies to **Maya Reter**.

In her excellent paper titled “Words on Trial: The Integral Role of Linguistic Analysis in Trials of Nazis and Neo-Nazis,” Reter highlighted the importance of terminology during the Holocaust and in postwar and later trials of (neo-) Nazis. The deliberate use of euphemisms with regard to mass atrocity served not only to obscure Nazi crimes as they occurred but also to deflect responsibility in the immediate postwar period and beyond. Challenging semantics and translations created space for Nazi defendants and Holocaust deniers to sow doubt about the Holocaust itself. The paper was written for Professor Benjamin Frommer's Holocaust Trials course, and the committee wrote that “Reter made a pointed and well-constructed argument that went beyond those of the authors she cited. She garnered evidence from primary and secondary sources to support her position. In addition, Reter engaged her readers with a cogent and thought-provoking narrative.”

The Jill Stacey Harris Prize in Jewish Studies has been awarded annually since 1991 for the best undergraduate essay in the field of Jewish Studies.

Graduate Student News

LIZA BERNSTEIN (Religious Studies) completed her third year of her PhD in Religious Studies after passing her comprehensive exams. In addition to taking exams in Religious Studies theory and methods and Rabbinics, she created a syllabus for a course titled “Gender and Judaism Across Time” that explores the different methodological surveys used to analyze gender in Judaism, from the Bible to modern-day Brooklyn.

SAVOY CURRY (History) completed her fourth year of her PhD in History. Her research interests broadly cover perceptions of medieval sexuality, illicit behavior, criminalization, and communal relations in the high to late Middle Ages. Curry’s dissertation project is an examination of Jewish and Christian attitudes towards interfaith sexual relationships in 13th-15th century Ashkenaz, as a means of understanding how both Christian and Jewish communities built religious boundaries in the late Middle Ages. She is particularly interested in how marginalized people affected and were affected by the increasing desire to define communal difference. She is a current recipient of the 2022-2023 Leo Baeck Fellowship Program, which has given her the opportunity to spend most of the past year conducting archival research in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. She presented her first conference paper in April and presented a second paper at the European Association for Jewish Studies conference in July. She was awarded a position for the 2023-2024 academic year as a visiting research fellow at Hebrew University, where she will join the project “Contending with Crises” under the supervision of Elisheva Baumgarten. Curry is also a current member of the programming committee for the Association for Jewish Studies, co-graduate representative for Northwestern’s Medieval Colloquium, and an active member of Northwestern University Graduate Workers (NUGW).

EMMA DAVIS (Political Science) finished her third year of her PhD in the Department of Political Science. She defended her dissertation prospectus in March for her dissertation titled “International Relations and the Jewish Question,” which examines early 20th century Jewish thought about self-determination and international order. In June, she presented a working chapter of her dissertation at the European Academy of Religion annual conference in St. Andrews, Scotland. During the past academic year, she served as a teaching assistant for the Department of Political Science and at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

PAUL FELLER-SIMMONS (Musicology) defended the prospectus for his dissertation, tentatively titled “Jewish Musicianship, Cultural Mobility, and Jewish-Gentile Exchanges in the Northwestern Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands (1650-1750).” Between October and February, he delivered papers at conferences organized by the American Musicological Society, the Association for Jewish Studies, and the American Handel Society. He also organized a themed session for the Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music in Geneva in June 2023. His research was awarded the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music’s Diversity and Inclusion Research Award, the American Musicological Society’s Eugene K. Wolf Travel Fund Award, and Northwestern’s Graduate Research Grant, which funded summer archival research in Germany and the Netherlands. His article “Hoy al Portal ha venido: La escena del nacimiento y el estilo galante en los villancicos navideños de la catedral de Santiago de Chile (c.1770 – c.1820)” was awarded an Honorable Mention for the Otto Mayer-Serra Award and was later accepted for publication for the journal *Diagonal: An Ibero-American Music Review*. Feller-Simmons was the recipient of Northwestern’s prestigious Presidential Fellowship for 2023-2025.

NOAH MARCUS (Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama) completed his first year of coursework for his Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama. His research interests can be defined broadly as the performance of Jewishness both on and off stage in America in the 20th and 21st centuries. In addition to his coursework, he had the honor of participating in the First Annual Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium, where he presented a course paper on the phenomenon of *Fiddler on the Roof*’s popularity in Japan.

IDIL OZKAN (Anthropology) is working on her dissertation, which is tentatively titled “Restoring Sephardic Genealogy After 500 Years: Historical Reparations, Politics of Citizenship, and Cultural-Linguistic Belonging among People of Sephardic Jewish Descent.” She presented her work at several conferences this year. She co-organized a panel titled “Contested Borderlands, Contested Subjecthoods” and presented her work at the Middle East and North African Studies Association Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. As part of her public facing scholarship endeavors, her op-ed got published by a respected Turkish political news outlet. Applying concepts and methodologies in linguistic anthropology to comment on the recent presidential elections in Turkey, her article addressed popular discourses on “leadership qualifications” through a focus on authoritative voice and its gendered aspects. In summer 2023, Ozkan attended the workshop series entitled “Turkey in/and the Balkans” at the Venice International University. She workshopped her dissertation chapter on Turkish crypto-Jews’ search for proof of their Sephardic Jewish ancestry. She was awarded the Crown Graduate Fellowship for the academic year 2023-2024.



Paul Feller-Simmons Awarded Prestigious Presidential Fellowship

Jewish Studies Cluster graduate student Paul Feller-Simmons (Musicology) was awarded Northwestern's Presidential Fellowship for 2023-25. The Presidential Fellowship is the most competitive and prestigious fellowship that Northwestern University awards to graduate students, who become members of the Northwestern Society of Fellows upon receiving it. The fellowship encourages fellows to pursue interdisciplinary research and actively participate in outreach initiatives. For his research project, Feller-Simmons investigates how musical experiences mobilized culture between Jewish and Christian communities and social and territorial borders in early-modern Northwestern Europe. His project demonstrates the dynamism and interconnectedness of historical Jewish cultures while shedding light on cultural mechanisms through which their communities would uphold their identities.

BOGDAN PAVLISH (History) is working on his dissertation titled “Nothing Exotic but Ourselves: Trade, Migration, and Conversion in the Armenian Diaspora of Poland-Lithuania in the Seventeenth Century.” His articles have been published in the *Journal of Early Modern History* (December 2022) and *Ab Imperio Quarterly* (May 2023). He presented his research at conferences and workshops in Cambridge, Florence, Budapest, and Chicago.

MOLLY SCHIFFER (Political Science) completed her first year of her PhD in the Department of Political Science. Next, she will continue to pursue her doctorate while conducting archival research on American Jewish interest group politics and immigration policy in the early 20th century, experimental work on potential sources of Black and Jewish intergroup solidarity, and causes and consequences of Jewish participation in the American Palestinian rights movement.

OMRI TUBI (Sociology) is currently completing his dissertation, which examines the politics of public health campaigns in Mandate Palestine and Israel, between 1920-1960. Additionally, Tubi is working on various manuscripts related to this project.

KALIA VOGELMAN-NATAN (Media, Technology and Society Program) had two papers published in the journal *Religions*. The first article, “Hilltop Youth and New Media: The Formation of a Young Religious Digital-Resistance Community,” provides insights into the Israeli hilltop youth’s religious-ideological perception while focusing on their attitude toward new media, an attitude that is part of their self-definition as a separatist community. The second article, “Oppositional Mirror on the Wall: Discursive Practices of Humorous Pashkevlim in Israel’s Ultra-Orthodox Community,” focuses on the old-fashioned medium of Pashkevlim posted around Jerusalem’s ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. The study analyzes the discursive practices of humorous imitations employed to mock, criticize, and challenge the rabbinic hegemony.

ANASTASIIA SIMFEROVSKA (Slavic Languages and Literatures) successfully defended her dissertation prospectus. In her dissertation titled “The Holocaust Text in East Europe: Migrating Images, Contested Narratives, Shifting Landscapes,” she seeks to explore cases of literary, poetic, and artistic borrowings, imitations, and mimicries in Holocaust texts created by different authors in the East European borderlands. She spent the summer of 2022 exploring the primary sources for her dissertation at the Yad Vashem Museum and Archive in Jerusalem and the Ghetto Fighters Museum, Archive and Library in Galilee, Israel. A significant part of chapter one of her dissertation was published as a peer-reviewed article in the *Journal of Holocaust Research*. Throughout the year, she gave presentations at international conferences at the Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin, and at the Memorial de la Shoah, Paris. In fall 2022, she taught remotely at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. In April 2023, she was a member of the “Visual Culture and the Holocaust” HEFNU Regional Institute.

ARIEL WEINER (Comparative Literary Studies) completed the sixth year of her PhD and is a Mellon Cluster Fellow in Jewish Studies. Her dissertation concerns the relationship between technical and religious mediation in the German Jewish discourses of the Weimar Period — particularly in the works of Martin Buber, Siegfried Kracauer, and Walter Benjamin. In the 2022-23 academic year, she presented work related to her research at the 2023 American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) Conference and at the Northwestern Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium. She also participated in the workshop series “Theories of Technology and Concepts of Experience Around the Work of Walter Benjamin,” which brought together international Benjamin scholars at Northwestern in April 2023. She will spend the 2023-24 academic year at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICI) in Berlin on a one-year DAAD Research Grant. There, she will continue work on her dissertation and undertake research at the Walter Benjamin Archive in Berlin, as well as the Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA) in Marbach.

CROWN GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies awards

the Crown Graduate Fellowship annually to one Northwestern graduate student whose dissertation research bears on an aspect of Jewish history, culture, or religion. **Idil Ozkan**, a doctoral candidate in Anthropology, is the 2023-2024 fellowship recipient.



Ozkan's dissertation examines how language, culture, and religion become central issues in Spain's and Portugal's reparation laws that extended citizenship to Sephardic Jews as atonement for the horrors of the Inquisition. The "right to return" for Sephardim, however, was contingent on the applicants evidencing their ancestry in medieval Iberia. Ozkan's project critically evaluates how Sephardic Jewish ancestry is understood and operationalized in legal texts, bureaucracy, and everyday life. Through oral histories, interviews, and participant observation, she shows the ethical and bureaucratic challenges that people of Sephardic Jewish lineage go through to prove their 500 years of ancestry. With a particular focus on the stories of *conversos* without any material trace of their Jewishness, Ozkan assesses the challenges and limitations of Iberian countries' reparation projects. In doing so, she analyzes the ideologies

around (ethnoreligious) authenticity, purity, and hybridity, critically exploring how undocumented oral histories that fall outside of the certainty of documents and archives become legally acknowledged as proofs of ancestry.

By looking into how and why Sephardic Jews and conversos in Turkey navigate the challenges set forth by Spain's atonement law, Ozkan's project further sheds ethnographic light on the everyday experience of authoritarianism, rising conservatism, as well as anti-Semitism in present-day Turkey. Theorizing ancestry in regard to its genetic, cultural, material, and legal properties, her dissertation provides unique insights into the fractures and discontents of reparation projects. Ozkan's dissertation research has been supported by several institutions, including the prestigious Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

Hebrew I

Hebrew II

Hebrew III: Hebrew Language and Culture

Hebrew III: Parents and Children in Israeli Society

Hebrew III: The Four-Dimensional Jerusalem

The Jews of Southeastern Europe

Jewish Material Culture

Jews in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, 1250-1917

Jews in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, 1917-1991

History of the Holocaust

Gender, Race, and the Holocaust

Daily Life in Israel/Palestine

Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Images of the Shtetl

Leisure and Popular Culture in 20th Century Palestine/Israel

It's Complicated: Love Stories in Israeli Literature and Israeli Culture

The Holocaust and Its Memory in Israel

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Clash of Historical Narratives

Holocaust/Genocide in Film and TV

Specters of the Canon: Women Writers in Modern Hebrew Literature

Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel

Otherness and Othering in Israeli Film

Water in Arid Lands: Israel and the Middle East

Medieval Sepharad: Language, History, and Memory of the Jewish Communities of Medieval Iberia

The Holocaust: Psychological Themes & Perspectives

Introduction to Judaism

Introduction to Hebrew Bible

From Jacob's Tents to Katz's Deli: American Judaism and "Sacred Space"

Public Learning Through the Arts: Magic, Monsters & The Holocaust

Trauma & Atrocity: Holocaust Memory, Memorials & Museums

Discovering Jewish Latin America

Between Coexistence and Intolerance: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain

Economic History of Israel

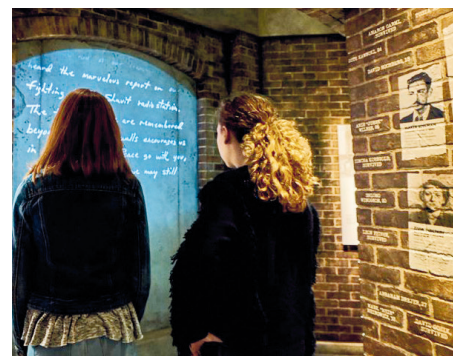
Israeli Society and Israeli Sociology

STUDENTS VISIT THE ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & EDUCATION CENTER

Professor Maayan Hilel organized a field trip to the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie, IL for the students in her “The Holocaust and its Memory in Israel” class. The four-hour guided tour at the museum on January 25 allowed the students to explore the history of the Holocaust as told through the personal belongings, photographs, historical records, and stories of local survivors and eyewitnesses.

Ari Friend, Weinberg '26

“ Having visited museums describing the Holocaust across the world, I specifically appreciated the ethos of this museum and its place in Skokie as a response to the Nazi protest of 1977. This ‘why’ served as a constant reminder throughout my time inside the museum. It beautifully underscored the necessity to combat hatred in all forms and the importance of classes like Professor Hilel’s. As the grandchild of a Holocaust survivor, it made me especially proud to know that Northwestern and the Jewish Studies program invest in the continuance of Holocaust education and thus actively work towards combating anti-Semitism.”



Shara Reimer, Weinberg '24

“ I learned so much at the museum, and the trip helped me to contextualize what I had learned in class. The most memorable part of the field trip was meeting with a Holocaust survivor. My class got to hear the survivor’s incredible story and ask questions, which was a truly meaningful and transformative experience. We also got to stand in a railroad car similar to the ones used in Nazi deportations, which was an extremely powerful moment.”

HEBREW-ARABIC EVENT, “BUILDING BRIDGES, CREATING CONNECTIONS”

In the winter quarter, Professor Hanna Tzucker Seltzer and her colleague Professor Fatima Khan from the MENA Languages Program created an event for students of Hebrew and students of Arabic as part of a series of meetings called “Building Bridges, Creating Connections.” At the event in March 2023, students from the Arabic program and the Hebrew program taught each other how to introduce themselves and how to write each other’s name in their respective languages. At the end of the evening, students shared a hearty dinner of food from the Middle East, where both Hebrew and Arabic are spoken and celebrated.



FACULTY NEWS

SCOTT ABRAMSON, Crown Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Abramson continued researching and writing his book manuscript, provisionally titled *Friends Behind Enemy Lines: The History of Israel's Secret Alliance with the Kurds of Iraq*. In winter 2023, he taught his new course “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Clash of Historical Narratives.” His nonpartisan approach to teaching so controversial a subject attracted the notice of *The Daily Northwestern*, which ran an article on his course in February 2023.

RONIT ALEXANDER, Lecturer in Middle East and North African Languages Program

Alexander continued to teach the first-year Hebrew classes and taught an extra second-year class in the spring quarter. She also collaborated with Hebrew teachers' certification programs from the U.S., South Africa, and Mexico. In these programs, she taught classes on incorporating technology tools in the language classroom, aiming to enhance the learning experience. This summer, she attended the Hebrew Language School program at Middlebury College again as she continues her journey toward a doctorate in foreign language acquisition.

DANNY M. COHEN, Associate Professor of Instruction School of Education & Social Policy, Charles Deering McCormick Distinguished Professor of Instruction

Cohen continued to take his “Unsilence” Holocaust teacher trainings and youth workshops on the road to a number of new schools, communities, and audiences, including middle school students within Chicago Public Schools; communities affiliated with the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) in Milwaukee; high school students at St. Joseph's Academy in St. Louis, Missouri; middle school students at the Donna Klein Jewish Academy in Palm Beach County, Florida; and teachers and informal educators training with the Museum of Holocaust and History Education at Kennesaw State University and the Breman Museum in Georgia. In the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern, Cohen continued to teach

his courses on Holocaust museum and memorial design, Holocaust pedagogy and marginalized memories, and Holocaust film and fiction as vehicles for social change.

SARAH CUSHMAN, Director of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University (HEFNU) and Lecturer in the Department of History

Cushman continued her role leading HEFNU. Her book in progress, *Women in Auschwitz*, is under contract with Indiana University Press. HEFNU hosted the 17th Biennial Lessons & Legacies Conference in Ottawa in November 2022 after a two-year pandemic-induced postponement. In December, Cushman participated in the Association of Jewish Studies Conference in Boston, chairing a roundtable discussion about the “spatial turn” in Holocaust Studies. Her work co-editing, with Joanne Pettitt and Dominic Williams, the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook on Auschwitz-Birkenau* (2025) is moving forward. She is contributing a chapter on women affiliated with the camp SS. In April, she gave a talk on Holocaust denial at Arizona State University for the Arizona Genocide Awareness Week. She taught “Gender, Race, and the Holocaust” at Northwestern in the spring.

GUY EHRLICH, Postdoctoral Fellow in Israel Studies

In 2022-2023, Ehrlich began his postdoctoral fellowship at the Crown Center. As part of the fellowship, he taught two courses on Hebrew literature and Israeli culture: “It's Complicated: Love Stories in Hebrew Literature” and “Specters of the Canon: Women Writers in Modern Hebrew Literature.” His book manuscript, *The Empty Places of Yehudit Hendel*, was awarded the Yaacov Bahat Prize for Best Original Scholarly Book Manuscript in Hebrew (given by Haifa University Press). This book focuses on the works of Israeli writer Yehudit Hendel (1921-2014) and is based on Ehrlich's dissertation, which was written at Tel Aviv University. It is forthcoming with Haifa University Press (2024). Ehrlich also continued working on several new academic articles and presented at conferences including American Comparative Literature Association, Yale's Annual Symposium of Modern Hebrew and Modern Jewish Literatures (Yale University), and the Association for Israel Studies.

PETER FENVES, Joan and Sarepta Harrison Professor of Literature, Professor of German, Comparative Literary Studies, and Jewish Studies

Over the course of the last several years, two of Fenves' books (*Late Kant and The Messianic Reduction*) were translated into Spanish and will appear this coming fall. One of the translators, Mauricio Oportus, is an advanced graduate student in Northwestern's Comparative Literary Studies program, while another, Rudy Pradenas, was a visiting scholar at Northwestern and is currently finishing his doctoral degree at the University of Michigan. Fenves' essay, “Democracias, según Benjamin y Derrida,” recently appeared in a volume titled *Jacques Derrida* (Buenos Aires and Madrid). Another essay, “Benjamin, Studying, China,” recently appeared in an issue of the *Guangzhou University Journal*. His follow-up reflections on Benjamin's relation to Chinese thought, “Detour and Dao: Benjamin, with Jullien, contra the Ontology of the Event,” was published this spring in *Theory, Culture & Society*. In April, Fenves participated in an international workshop on Leibniz at Princeton and soon thereafter hosted an international workshop on Benjamin at Northwestern. During the last year, he also took part in various podcasts and similar internet-mediated discussions of scholarly topics, ranging from 20th century German theology to Karl Marx's doctoral dissertation.

BENJAMIN FROMMER, Associate Professor in the Department of History

In between finishing his first marathon and cheering on his soccer kids, Frommer served this past year as the faculty director of the Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster. Together with the student co-leaders, he organized the first annual cluster symposium, where five graduate students presented on their latest research. With respect to his own work, Frommer has recently published articles on comparative retribution against Nazis and collaborators in postwar Europe and on the eviction and forced resettlement of Jews in Nazi-occupied Bohemia and Moravia. In December 2022, he spent a week in Brno (Czechia) as a distinguished visiting scholar at Mendel University, and in August 2023 he led a 10-day seminar at the US Holocaust Museum Memorial in Washington, D.C. on “Intermarriage During the Holocaust: Jewish and Romani ‘Mixed’ Families in Nazi Europe.”

RODRIGO GARCÍA-VELASCO,

Sava Ranisavljevic Postdoctoral Fellow
in Judeo-Spanish Studies

García-Velasco continued work on his book project, titled *Jews and Muslims Before the Law in Christian Iberia, 1000-1200*, which appraises how legal classifications of Jewish and Muslim religious differences first emerged in medieval Spain. García-Velasco has also recently published the article, “Converting the Land: Property, Legal Knowledge, and Documentary Practices in Toledo and the Ebro Valley, 1085–c. 1200 CE,” in the journal *Medieval Encounters*. The piece demonstrates how cathedrals and monastic institutions in frontier towns such as Toledo neighboring al-Andalus used Arabic language and Islamic legal cultures to create their archives and foundational myths. At the Crown Center, García-Velasco taught a course on the Jews of Medieval Spain and presented some of his latest work in a colloquium on anti-Judaism in medieval Spanish law, which will be published in 2024 under the title “The Liber Iudiciorum and Iberian anti-Judaism.”

MAAYAN HILEL, Lecturer in Jewish and Israel Studies and Assistant Director of The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies

Hilel made further progress on her book project *Leisure, Pleasure, and Fun in Mandatory Palestine*, while also publishing book reviews in publications such as *Critical Inquiry* and *American Jewish History*. She taught “Leisure and Popular Culture in 20th Century Palestine/Israel” and “Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948.” Hilel also developed and taught two new courses: “The Holocaust and its Memory in Israel” and a first-year seminar “Daily Life in Israel.” On campus, she gave presentations of her research at the MENA Monday lecture series and at the Hillel Faculty Luncheon. Hilel also gave a talk at the 2023 Society for the History of Children and Youth conference and participated in the international research project “Unread Haifa.”

Guy Ehrlich Wins Yaacov Bahat Prize for Best Original Scholarly Book Manuscript in Hebrew

Ron Robin, President, University of Haifa; Guy Ehrlich, Postdoctoral Fellow, Northwestern University; Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, Chief Editor, Haifa University Press



ȘTEFAN CRISTIAN IONESCU, Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Visiting Associate Professor in Holocaust Studies in the Department of History

This year, Ionescu taught one new Northwestern course: “Jews of Southeastern Europe” (fall 2022). He continued to work on his book project examining the restitution of Jewish property in post-Holocaust Romania. During the last academic year, he also published two journal articles, titled “The International Struggle of Romanian Jewry for Holocaust Restitution, 1944–1948,” (*Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*) and “Politics of Holocaust Memory in Communist and Post-Communist Romania: On Jewish Communist Survivor Matei Gall’s Multiple Life Stories,” (co-authored with Dr. Dana Mihailescu; *Yad Vashem Studies*). Ionescu also presented papers at two academic conferences: 70 Years of Holocaust Compensation and Restitution International Conference organized by Tel Aviv University Museum of the Jewish People, and The Destruction of Jewish Communities in South-Eastern Europe during the Second World War: Roots, Policies, Practices, and Outcomes, Uppsala University.

JACOB LASSNER, Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor Emeritus of Jewish Civilization in the Departments of History and Religious Studies

Lassner presented “The Origins of Middle East Area Studies in the US” at the Association for Middle Eastern and African Studies; “Did Maimonides Label Muhammad Deranged When He Referred to Him as Mshgg’ in the Risala to the Jews of Yemen” at the meeting of the American Oriental Society; and “The Modern Politics of Jerusalem in Light of the Historic Past” at the Association for Israel Studies. He completed the manuscript for his fourteenth book, *Judaism and Islam, Residual Memories, Cultural Transference and the Competition for Sacred Space*. His review article on Jewish themes in the Qur’an and the sanctity of Jerusalem, will appear in the fall of 2023.

PHYLLIS LASSNER, Professor of Instruction Emerita in the Cook Family Writing Program, the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program, and Jewish Studies Program

Lassner co-edited two collections of scholarly essays, including *Holocaust Literature and Representation: Their Lives, Our Words* (co-edited with Judith Baumel-Schwartz). This collection of academic autobiographical essays is the first of its kind. Scholars working in the field of Holocaust literature and representation

recount their personal journeys to becoming specialists in Holocaust studies. The second, *Cultural Expressions of Jewish Identity and the Holocaust* in *The Journal of Jewish Identities* (co-edited with Victoria Aaron), is a special issue arguing that the Holocaust and its memory has provided a new, questioning sense of what it means to be Jewish. Lassner's essay "The Dark Path Back: Investigating Holocaust Memory in Sara Paretsky's Novel *Total Recall*" appeared in *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, and "Performing Exile as an Undercover Agent: The Spy Films of Lili Palmer" was published in *Jewish Film and New Media* 9.2. She presented at three conferences: the Annual Scholars Conference on Holocaust History and Literature; Jewish American and Holocaust Literature; and Association for Jewish Studies.

LUCILLE KERR, Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Kerr's teaching, research, and mentoring of students at the graduate and undergraduate levels focuses on Latin American fiction, testimonial texts, and films, which include Jewish-Latin American cultural production. Her engagement with Jewish-Argentine literature and culture has expanded the content of her web-based Latin American Literature and Film Archive. In spring 2023, she published a review of A. Kaminsky's *The Other/Argentina: Jews, Gender, and Sexuality in the Making of a Modern Nation* (2021). In fall 2022, she taught "Discovering Jewish Latin America."

MARCUS MOSELEY, Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Yiddish Literature Moseley taught "Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Images of the Shtetl" and once again saw increased enrollment reflecting an international resurgence of interest in Yiddish language and culture. He was the Yiddish consultant for the play *Indecent*, written by Paula Vogel and presented by Northwestern's Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts in April 2023.

SHMULIK NILI, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science Nili's third book project, *Philosophizing the Indefensible: Strategic Political Theory*, finalized in the past year, will appear with Oxford University Press in October 2023, and a recently completed fourth book project, *Beyond the Law's Reach*, is expected to be published in 2024. During the last year, funding from the Crown Family Center enabled Nili to spend more than two months on a return visit to Israel's Reichman University, where he took part in high-level forums devoted to Israel's constitutional crisis and judicial upheaval. He also presented on international ethics and democratic theory in Israel, the UK, France, and Spain, alongside multiple U.S. forums. At the undergraduate level at Northwestern, Nili taught "Integrity and Politics of Corruption" as well as a new course on the ethics of foreign policy.



Anna Parkinson on research trip to Cape Town, South Africa

ANNA PARKINSON, Associate Professor in the Department of German Parkinson continues working on a book project on humanism and the Holocaust in postwar German exile literature, towards which she conducted research in summer 2022 in the German Literary Archives in Marbach, Germany. As part of this project, she is currently completing an article for *European Holocaust Studies* on the "talking cure" of psychoanalysis in the context of child Holocaust survivors, which was first presented in 2022 at the conference Childhood at War and Genocide at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, Germany. Parkinson also presented a Ziegler Lecture on the post-war writing of

Jewish survivor and author H.G. Adler and a paper at a two-day conference on the legacy of critical theorist Lauren Berlant's work in German Studies. Initial training towards a second research project on forensics and literature, titled "Hearts and Bones" and sponsored by a Mellon New Directions Fellowship, was brought to a close with field visits to the archive of the Museo de La Memoria y Los Derechos Humanos (Museum of Memory and Human Rights) in Santiago, Chile, in December 2022; and to Cape Town, South Africa in February 2023. At home in Northwestern's Department of German, she was involved in the "Thomas Mann in Exile, for Social Democracy" symposium in February 2023. She continues to hold the position of Honors Supervisor; and in spring quarter she acted as the interim Director of Graduate Studies. She enjoyed designing and teaching a new interdisciplinary class for the Kaplan Humanities Institute, titled "Shame! Histories and Cultures of Emotion."

YOHANAN PETROVSKY-SHTERN, Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor in the Department of History During the 2022-23 academic year, Petrovsky-Shtern presented scholarly lectures and public presentations at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, George Mason University, Hebrew National Library, Shevchenko Scientific Society of America in New York, and the National Museum of Ethnography in Lviv, Ukraine. He was also a guest on multiple radio, television, and web-based programs. He co-edited a book of memoirs about his late father, a prominent literary scholar, titled *Miron Petrovsky and his Epoch* (2023), in Russian and Ukrainian, for which he also wrote two chapters. He edited two scholarly monographs, one by Yuri Biryulov, *Lviv Jewish Architectural Legacy, 1550-1939* (2022), in Ukrainian, and another one by Iryna Kotlobulatova, *Jewish Photographers and Photo Studios in Lviv/Lwow/Lemberg, 1850-1939* (2023), in Ukrainian, and provided both books with English annotations. His article on Rabbi Nachman, Uman, and Ukrainian Hasidism "Le hassidisme ukrainien: pourquoi aller à Ouman?" appeared in *La Règle du jeu* (October, 2022), in French, and

his book chapter “The Ukrainian Odessa of Vladimir Jabotinsky,” appeared in Mirja Lecke, Efraim Sicher, eds., *Cosmopolitan Spaces in Odessa: A Case Study of Urban Context* (2023). At Northwestern, in addition to teaching, he served on search committees in Religious Studies and History. For his work on the Jewish Museum project in Lviv, he was awarded the NADAV foundation three-year grant, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation banned him from entering the country and included him in its *persona non grata* list for his active defense of Ukraine and sharp critique of Russian aggression.

ELIE REKHESS, Crown Visiting Professor in Israel Studies, Director of the Northwestern Israel Innovation Project (IIP), and Israel Liaison in the Office of the Vice President for International Relations

In September 2022, after a long hiatus due to COVID-19, Elie Rekhess co-led a group of 16 undergraduate students on the third annual Global Engineering Trek to Israel on the topic of water in arid lands. As director of IIP, Rekhess hosted guest speaker David Horowitz, founding editor of *The Times of Israel*, for the webinar “Israeli Elections 2022: Decision at Last, Again?” in November 2022. In spring 2023, Rekhess attended the ICI-SNPI Entrepreneurship and Innovation Conference hosted by Kellogg’s Crown Family Israel Center for Innovation. In April, Rekhess moderated a panel discussion featuring Ran Tal, film director, and James Snyder, executive chairman of the Jerusalem Foundation, Inc., framing the film *1341 Frames of Love and War* in the present-day Israeli political landscape. Alongside Professor Aaron Packman, Rekhess co-taught the course “Water in Arid Lands: Israel and the Middle East” and co-hosted the Seventh Annual Symposium on Water in Israel and the Middle East, this year in collaboration with MEF University, Istanbul, Turkey. Rekhess is currently working on a book with Itamar Rabinovich, former Israeli Ambassador to the United States, titled *Israel, Jewish and Democratic? Israel and its Palestinian Arab Citizens*.

KENNETH SEESKIN, Interim Director, the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, Emeritus Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization

Although officially retired, 2022-23 was nonetheless an active year for Seeskin. He was called out of retirement to serve as Interim Director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. He published an article on Maimonides’ virtue ethics and has articles on Plato’s influence on Jewish thought and the possibility of forgiving the commandant of Auschwitz in the works. Seeskin participated in an international conference on the binding of Isaac (*akedah*) at the University of Pisa, and his conference paper is slated to appear on TheTorah.com. He has been asked to have his essays on Maimonides translated into Persian.

DAVID SHYOVITZ, Associate Professor in the Department of History

David Shyovitz spent the 2022-23 year on leave as a Faculty Fellow at Northwestern’s Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. He spent the spring term as the Fishman Visiting Professor at Vassar College, and over the course of the year delivered lectures at Ben Gurion and Bar Ilan Universities (Israel), NYU, the University of Chicago, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), and at the University of Leeds (UK). He was the 2023 recipient of a “Special Commendation for Curricular Innovation” from the Medieval Academy of America for his work developing a six-week immersive medieval Jewish History-themed program for Camp Moshava, a Jewish overnight camp in Wild Rose, WI.

HANNA TZUKER SELTZER, Assistant Professor of Instruction in the Jewish Studies and the Middle East and North African (MENA) Languages Programs

Tzucker Seltzer created two new classes during the academic year 2022-23. “Fun Stuff” for third-year Hebrew students was created as a bridge to other thematic third year Hebrew classes. Organized around themes of leisure time and volunteer activities, its topics lend themselves to more advanced grammatical structures and diverse vocabulary than those learned in the first two years of Hebrew. She also created a film class, “Otherness and Otherring in Israeli

Film,” which focused on various minorities in Israel, including the Palestinians, Bedouin women, and foreign workers. In November 2022, Tzucker Seltzer chaired a panel at a Northwestern conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of S.Y. Agnon’s collection of stories *At the Handles of The Lock* (*Al Kapot Ha-Man’ul*). She spoke at “Otherness in Israeli Society,” an event initiated by J Street and hosted at Hillel in February 2023. Tzucker Seltzer also presented at the June 2023 National Association of Professors of Hebrew Conference at Tel Aviv University. Together with her colleague Professor Fatima Khan, Tzucker Seltzer initiated and produced a winter event for Hebrew and Arabic students to learn, converse, and dine together.

BARRY WIMPFHEIMER, Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies and the Pritzker School of Law

Wimpfheimer completed a three-year term as chair of Religious Studies. During his time as chair, the department hired four new tenure-line faculty members, including Shira Schwartz, who specializes in Judaism and will also be on faculty in Jewish Studies. Wimpfheimer also co-edits *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*, which is co-sponsored by the Crown Family Center and publishes three issues a year. He is currently writing a book about the Mishnah as a work of literature and has started researching a book about two friends in 19th century Jewish Munich.

İPEK K. YOSMAOĞLU, Associate Professor in the Department of History

Yosmaoğlu organized and hosted an international conference on the centenary of the Lausanne Peace Conference and Treaty of July 1923. Titled “The Afterlives of Lausanne: Society, Politics, and Belonging after Empire,” the conference took place in May 2023 and brought together scholars from the U.S., Europe, Turkey, and Armenia in Evanston. The conference was the academic year’s final activity sponsored by the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program. The Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association named her as their president-elect at the MESA conference in November 2022.

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