

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES



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On the cover: Detail of leggings,
Sanaa, Yemen, 1930s.
From *Dress Codes: Revealing
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From the Director



In November 2013 Northwestern University hosted a conference entitled “The Zionist Ideal in Israeli Culture: Dream and Reality.” I opened the conference with the following remarks about the challenges of Israel studies:

“Israel is a controversial topic. There are two stories told about Israel. There is the story of Israel’s success: ‘Israel is a thriving Western-style democracy with

a growing economy and particular success in areas like technology and television/film.’ And then there is the story of Israel’s treachery: ‘Israel is an outpost of American late capitalism and uses Western resources to oppress indigenous populations.’ Because of the perpetually fraught politics surrounding Israel, discussions of Israel often lean towards advocacy. And advocacy leads people to latch on to the story paradigm that best suits their political position and to suppress the alternative story paradigm.

“The field of Israel studies is a response to this dilemma and attempts to produce an academic discussion of Israel that possesses the same rigor and methodology as one would apply to any subject in the university. Israel studies is not an advocacy arm of Israel, and it does not adhere to one story about Israel. Rather, Israel studies places its hope in the university as a space for a different type of discourse about Israel. On its best day, the academy represents a discursive space for critical, and particularly self-critical, dialogue.

“To be sure, the academy doesn’t always have its best day. Sometimes academics are as guilty as others in flattening out a complicated reality and working as advocates within a single story paradigm.

“At the end of the day, though, academia is a social environment in which ideas are not only hypothesized and tested but sent for peer review with a goal of reaching scholarly consensus. The emergence of Israel studies is a statement that our institutions of higher learning are making about the possibilities of producing a new conversation about Israel.

“To reflect on the state of Israel is to realize that this small and young nation has been a nexus for most of the hot-button issues of Western civilization since its inception. Whether one is considering the history of the Cold War, the relationship between state and religion, or conflict between Islam and the West, one must consider Israel. Israel functions as a cipher through which scholars approach the most vexing questions of our day. But because of Israel’s fraught social, ideological, military, and political realities, Israel also functions as a mirror for the challenges and problems that other countries and cultures possess.

“Israel studies is still a young field, but it is one that can be the site of a complex multi-disciplinary consideration of all aspects of Israel: its economics, its sociology, its foreign and domestic affairs, its high and low culture, its technology, and its military. Each of these is both understudied and overdetermined in ways that encourage a new generation of students to seek out answers far more sophisticated than the journalistic ones they often encounter. The resources being introduced into the study of Israel will allow Israel studies the opportunity to become a model for the melding of humanities and social sciences in the consideration of a country and culture. At Northwestern we have already begun this process by offering courses on Israel in religious studies, gender studies, history, comparative literature, and sociology, in addition to those courses in political science that focus exclusively on Israel’s politics. We have been fortunate already—thanks to a partnership with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago—to house two postdocs in Israel studies. As we grow here at Northwestern, we anticipate an even richer set of lenses with which to study Israel as a critical subject.”

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies remains committed to our Jewish studies courses and programs while adding the focus on the study of Israel, its people, and its culture. We look forward to new opportunities and new challenges.



Barry Scott Wimpfheimer

Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Law

Director, Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies

“To reflect on the state of Israel is to realize that this small and young nation has been a nexus for most of the hot-button issues of Western civilization since its inception.”

Inaugural conference explores Zionist ideal

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies held its inaugural Israel studies conference, “The Zionist Ideal in Israeli Culture: Dream and Reality,” November 17–19, 2013, on Northwestern’s Evanston campus. The conference’s lectures, discussions, and performances, all free and open to the public, drew up to a hundred attendees each—even when storms, flooding, and nearby tornados made local travel challenging.



Elie Rekhess

More than 20 world-class scholars and artists participated in what cochair Elie Rekhess described in his opening remarks as an “academic [exploration] of Israeli culture, not Israel week.” Rekhess, Northwestern’s Visiting Crown Chair in Israel Studies and founder of the Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation at Tel Aviv University, said the conference would investigate the relationship between Zionist ideology and the cultural evolution of the Jewish state from its pre-1948 roots to the present.

In the keynote address Yigal Schwartz, a Hebrew literature professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, spoke about

divisions within Ashkenazi Jewish literature. A performance by Tel Aviv University’s MultiPiano wrapped up opening night. The ensemble performed three pieces designed for four, six, and eight hands, including Aryeh Levanon’s *Land of Four Languages*, commissioned in 2012 to capture Israel’s cultural diversity with Yemeni Hebrew, Yiddish, Sephardic, and Bedouin themes.

Conference academic sessions over the next two days focused on five cultural media: music and dance, theater, visual arts, literature, and cinema (see accompanying list of presenters and topics). Speakers not only read research papers but also used film clips, musical extracts, and other media in their presentations. They took questions from the audience and other panelists and engaged in vigorous debate. “Leaving quite a lot of time for discussions worked out really well,” commented panelist Freddie Rokem of Tel Aviv University. “The combination of Israelis living in Israel most of the time, Israelis living in the United States for a long time, and those born in other countries who have made Israeli culture their field of research was interesting.”

Religious and ethnic diversity was considered in several sessions. Yaron Shemer, an assistant professor of Asian studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, addressed the Mizrahi cultural heritage in film. Lee Perlman of Tel Aviv University delivered a nuanced evaluation of the growing trend of joint Hebrew-Arabic theater and the evolving role of Israeli Arabs on the stage. Assaf Shelleg, a musicologist then at the University of Virginia, gave a comprehensive interactive presentation on the phenomenon of Israeli art music and followed his talk with a video of one of his solo piano performances.

The conference concluded with a pair of events showcasing prominent Israeli artists. Dror Moreh, whose 2012 documentary *The Gatekeepers* was nominated for an Academy Award, was interviewed by Northwestern School of Communication professors David and Debra Tolchinsky before a packed audience. *The Gatekeepers* tells the story of the Israeli internal security service through in-depth interviews of six former heads, archival footage, and computer animation. The question-and-answer session that followed the interview drew the audience into a debate about Moreh’s criticism of Israeli government policies. In the conference finale, MultiPiano returned for a second performance.

Besides being, as panelist Amy Horowitz of Indiana University observed, “the first conference . . . to focus on Israeli performing arts in the context of a deep inquiry” into Zionist ideology, the conference was innovative in other ways. Horowitz noted that the degree of interaction among participants from diverse backgrounds was unusual for an academic meeting: “Participants marveled at the opportunities to engage with one another, with Northwestern faculty and students, and with the local Jewish community.”





Dror Moreh

Also unusual was that the conference had been an interdisciplinary brainchild resulting from a joint trip to Israel made by Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music Dean Toni-Marie Montgomery, Rekhess, and others. Rekhess was responsible for organizing the conference; Montgomery and Northwestern President Morton Schapiro helped to raise financial support.

“The conference signaled the Crown Center’s plans to create opportunities for the Northwestern community and the public to sample Israeli high culture and to engage in serious academic consideration of all matters relating to Israel,” said Barry Wimpfheimer, center director and conference cochair with Rekhess. (See the director’s letter on pages 2–3 for more.)

MultiPiano director Tomer Lev, a professor of music at Tel Aviv University, expressed the hope that his group’s participation “was just a beginning of an ongoing collaboration between our schools, faculty members, and students.”

Northwestern President Schapiro reinforced such sentiments at a dinner he hosted at the president’s house for conference participants and other invited guests. Schapiro said that the conference launched an expanded relationship between Northwestern and Israel, and he pledged to send students and personnel to work in Israel and to receive Israeli scholars and artists at the University.

Conference Panels

Cinema

Barry Wimpfheimer, director, Crown Center, Northwestern University, chair

Nitzan Ben-Shaul, professor of film and television studies, Tel Aviv University, “[Siege Mentality Refractions in Israeli Cinema: A Historical Overview](#)”

Yaron Shemer, assistant professor of Asian studies and Hebrew Program adviser, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “[Time and Space in Mizrahi Cinema: The Limits of the Zionist Reach](#)”

Miri Talmon, Schusterman Visiting Professor for Israel Studies, Smith College, Tel Aviv University, “[From Zionist Visions to Israeli Realities: The Cinematic Chronicles](#)”

Literature

David Shyovitz, assistant professor of history, Northwestern University, chair

Rachel S. Harris, assistant professor of Israeli literature and culture in comparative and world literature, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, “[Rethinking Zionism: Changing Perspectives in Israeli Fiction \(B. Tammuz, A. B. Yehoshua, A. Hilu\)](#)”

Hannan Hever, Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature, Yale University, “[Israeli Poetry and the Palestinian Nakba—An Overview](#)”

Yigal Schwartz, professor of Hebrew literature, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, “[Hebrew Literature as a Melting Pot—The Case of Ashkenazi Narratives](#)”

Eric Zakim, associate professor, Graduate Field Committee in Film Studies Program in Modern Hebrew, University of Maryland, “[The Reemergence of Israeli Poetry in the 21st Century](#)”

Music and Dance

Inna Naroditskaya, associate professor of musicology, Northwestern University, chair

Yossi Klein Halevi, senior fellow, Shalom Hartman Institute; contributing editor, *New Republic*, “[Merging Jewish Piyutim into Israeli Rock Music: Meir Ariel as a Precursor](#)”

Amy Horowitz, senior fellow in Israeli cultural studies, International Studies Program, Indiana University, “[Sound Barriers and Their Transgression: Mediterranean Israeli Music 1970s–90s](#)”

Assaf Shelleg, American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprises Assistant Professor of Musicology and Jewish Studies, University of Virginia, “[Diluting the National Allegory: On the Agency of Jewish Musical Traditions in Israeli Art Music of the 1950s](#)”

Nina Spiegel, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer Assistant Professor of Israel Studies, Portland State University, “[Performing Nationalism: The Development of Folk and Contemporary Dance in Israel](#)”

Theater

Hendrik Spruyt, Norman Dwight Harris Professor of International Relations and director, Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies, Northwestern University, chair

Adi Barak, postdoctoral research fellow, University of Chicago, “[On War and Soldiers: The Israeli Ethos on Stage](#)”

Lee Perlman, executive director, America-Israel Cultural Foundation; research fellow, Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University, “[Shared Space: Zionist and Palestinian Narratives in Israeli Theater Collaborations \(2000–2010\)](#)”

Freddie Rokem, professor emeritus of theater studies, Tel Aviv University, “[Representations of Violence on the Hebrew/Israeli Stage: Hanoch Levin and Bertolt Brecht](#)”

Visual Arts

Shaul Mitelpunkt, postdoctoral fellow, Crown Family Center, Northwestern University, chair

Dalia Manor, art historian, critic, and curator, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, “[First Person Plural: Israeli Artists between the Self and the Nation, 1950s–80s](#)”

Elie Rekhess, Visiting Crown Chair in Israel Studies, Northwestern University, “[Soldiers by Adi Nes: Revisiting the Model of Israeli Masculinity](#)”

Course helps students see both sides in Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Most of the 30 students who enrolled in last spring's Judaism and (Non)Violence: Theology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict course already thought of themselves as either pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. By the final class session, however, they'd decided that there was "no need for such labels," as student Nida Bajwa put it.

"Imposing labels doesn't do a conflict that is so complicated any justice, and it doesn't do it any good," said Bajwa. "As long as we are only pro-Palestinian or only pro-Israeli, we will be antichange and antiprogress."

Bajwa had herself started out with strong pro-Palestinian views. Yakir Englander, the Crown Family Center postdoctoral fellow who proposed and taught the course, grew up in a Hasidic community in Israel but over the last decade has dedicated himself to "holding both narratives." His purpose in the course was to challenge students to do the same.

When Englander served in the Israel Defense Forces starting in the late 1990s, one of his duties was collecting the bodies of people killed in the conflict. He had been taught that the enemy wanted only to kill him. But "not believing that people could be so crazy," he sought to understand the other side. He joined the interfaith organization Kids4Peace, which brings together Jewish, Muslim, and Christian families for interfaith dialogue and nonviolent action, and in 2007 became the director of its Israel and Palestine program. The kind of work Englander promotes in Kids4Peace was a model for his Northwestern class.

Students of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and with differing and strongly held views, participated in Englander's seminar. It covered the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, how Jews apply religious texts to it, and how Jewish Americans appropriate Israel in their identity. The key to Englander's approach was what he calls intimate criticism—"the ability to critique your own views with a deep love for your own narrative as well as respect for the 'other.'"

One of Englander's goals was for students to "try to feel the other side." Pro-Palestinian students learned about deep spiritual

connections between Jewish tradition and the land of Israel through analysis of texts produced by rabbis of the settler movements. Pro-Israel students learned about violence arising from Jewish tradition and how some American Jews and Jewish organizations have at times used the conflict for their own agendas without bearing the Palestinians' needs in mind. Practicing intimate criticism allowed students to gain credibility before offering a critique of the other, Englander said. The course transcended critique, challenging the students "to offer an alternative, arising from an understanding of the needs of real people and translated into nonharmful action."

Although Englander won't be offering the course again—he completed his postdoc and is now a visiting scholar at Harvard Divinity School—Crown Family Center director Barry Wimpfheimer thinks it set a good precedent. "It showed that we can tackle a thorny issue with multiple perspectives, and the students felt that they were challenged and grew from the experience," he said. "A goal of pedagogy is to change our students' ways of thinking, and I think this course did that really well."

A student in the class, Naib Mian, followed up the course with an article that appeared in *The Protest*, a Northwestern social justice newsmagazine and website. "Effective change won't come out of universities unless campus communities attempt to collectively and creatively rethink the issue," he wrote. "Englander's class did just that, offering new perspectives and the ability to discuss how to take meaningful action towards not only ending a conflict but also creating reconciliation. With an issue as dense and complex as this one, the first step towards that is knowledge."

Yakir Englander



Retirement on horizon for Holocaust scholar Hayes

The next academic year will be a swan song for Peter Hayes as the Holocaust scholar concludes 35 years of teaching at Northwestern in June 2015. He will formally retire in August 2016.

“You know, all the clichés are true: it seems as if I just started teaching, and the years have whizzed by,” says the Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies and a specialist in 20th-century German history, particularly the Nazi period. “It’s been a great run, and I’m very grateful to the University for all the opportunities it opened to me, especially to spend so many rewarding hours in classrooms with such attentive and responsive students.”

Hayes is a living legend among undergraduate students who relish his “infectious passion” and lectures that command “unblemished attention from the audience,” to quote from two of their reviews. A recipient of the Weinberg College Distinguished Teaching Award and the Northwestern Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award, he held a Charles Deering McCormick Professorship of Teaching Excellence, the University’s highest honor for teaching, in 2007–10.

Hayes has not limited his teaching to the classroom, seeing a need to close the “widening and particularly stark gap” between popular opinion and what historians of the Holocaust have discovered in 30 years of serious study. He has given public lectures in the Northwestern Alumnae continuing education program and elsewhere about myths and misconceptions surrounding the Holocaust, including that anti-Semitism was key in bringing Hitler to power and that many more lives could have been saved by the Allies, by individuals, or by Jewish resistance.

“Every contemporaneous source confirms that fear and hatred toward socialists and communists had much more to do with Hitler’s rise than fear and hatred of Jews,” he says. Extermination of the Jews wasn’t on the agenda until the late 1930s, after Hitler realized that he could not drive the Jews out of ever-expanding German territory.

As for how Hitler might have been stopped earlier, “Half of the victims were slaughtered in 11 months, from March 1942 to February 1943, in an orgy of violence that the Allies could do almost nothing to impede,” Hayes asserts. Nor would resistance by individual sympathizers or the Jews themselves have been effective: “The survival rates in ghettos where leaders encouraged resistance was



no better than in those where leaders chose to work closely with Nazis. For large numbers of Jews to survive, protection by national governments had to become available to them.”

Hayes’s 11 books debunk the misconceptions. They include the prize winners *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era and Lessons and Legacies I: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, and, most recently, *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (edited with John K. Roth) and *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (with Eckart Conze, Norbert Frei, and Moshe Zimmermann). His anthology/history of the Holocaust, *How Was It Possible? A Reader on the Holocaust*, is scheduled to appear in early 2015, and he is working on turning his celebrated The History of the Holocaust class into a book. He also hopes to complete a book called *Profits and Persecution: German Big Business in the Third Reich* (in partnership with Stephan Lindner of the University of the Bundeswehr in Munich) and a manuscript on German elites and National Socialism.

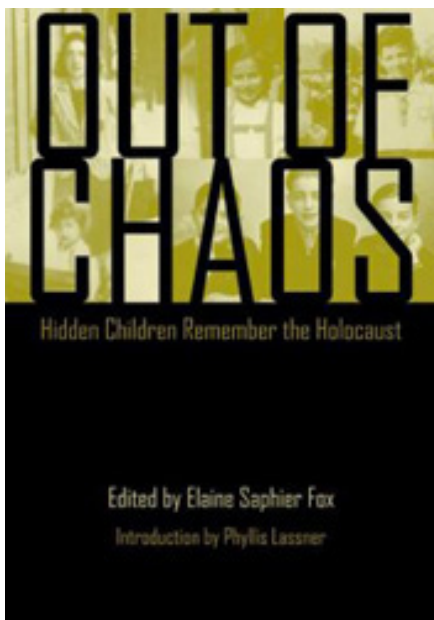
Hayes’s PhD is from Yale University. He joined Northwestern in 1980 as an instructor in the history department and has been Weiss Holocaust Professor since 2000. He has been a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s academic committee since 2000 and this year became its chair.

In retirement, Hayes hopes to continue writing; to teach part time at his undergraduate alma mater, Bowdoin College; and “to spend lots of time walking my dogs along Lake Michigan and to fulfill my long-deferred ambitions to learn to play the piano, to take a cruise along the Chilean and Argentinian coasts, and to visit Tahiti, Australia, and New Zealand.”

2013–14 Events

Out of Chaos reading, discussion, and book signing

On October 1, 2013, contributors to *Out of Chaos: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust* (Northwestern University Press, 2013) shared poignant personal stories and poems reflecting their childhood experiences of the Holocaust. A book signing followed the reading and discussion. Faculty member Phyllis Lassner, who wrote the book's introduction, moderated the program with editor Elaine Fox.



Moshe Halbertal (at podium; second from left)

Renée and Lester Crown Speaker Series

Moshe Halbertal, an internationally renowned public intellectual and a prominent scholar of Jewish studies, visited Northwestern on October 23, 2013, to present “The Jewish Democratic State’: Israel between Nationalism, Religion, and Liberalism.” In this second annual Renée and Lester Crown Lecture, Halbertal focused on the tension between religion, morality, and democracy. Halbertal is a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at New York University Law School.

The Last Flight of Petr Ginz film screening and discussion

Churchill Roberts, director of *The Last Flight of Petr Ginz*, presented his film at Northwestern on November 12, 2013. The showing was followed by a discussion with Roberts and faculty members Phyllis Lassner and Benjamin Frommer. The documentary, about a teenage Czech diarist, novelist, and artist who died in Auschwitz at age 16, earned an artistic achievement award at the 2012 Jerusalem Film Festival.



The Zionist Ideal in Israeli Culture: Dream and Reality

(Please see story on pages 4–5.)

Allan and Norma Harris Memorial Lecture in Jewish Studies

Benjamin Sommer, professor in the Department of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at the Jewish Theological Seminary, delivered “Revelation, Authority, and Ambiguity in Deuteronomy” on December 5, 2013. Sommer outlined the ways in which the redactors responsible for Deuteronomy were driven by a proto-rabbinic interpretation of some issues of biblical theology.

Manfred H. Vogel Memorial Lecture in Judaic Studies

In “Same People, Different Worlds: Israel, America, and Their Jews in the 21st Century,” Yehudah Mirsky characterized the ways in which Israeli and American Jews have produced vastly and fundamentally different Jewish cultures. Mirsky is associate

professor in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University. The lecture was presented on April 24, 2014.

The Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization

On June 11, 2014, Jeremy Dauber, Atran Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture at Columbia University, presented “Sholem Aleichem: A Life in Fact and Fiction.” Dauber interwove biography and literature to illuminate this famous author’s life and his works. The program was cosponsored by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

Early Modern Workshop

At “Healing, Medicine, and Jews in the Early Modern World,” 14 scholars from Germany, France, the Netherlands, England, Israel, Canada, and the United States representing different fields of



early modern study presented papers that broadened the discussion of Jewish participation in and attitudes toward healing and medicine. The workshop, held August 19–20, 2014, was organized by Northwestern University and the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

Other lectures

November 11, 2013
Rifka Cook, Northwestern University
“A Secret Passage: A Conversational Visit with Dona Gracia Mendes”
Cosponsored by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

January 16, 2014
Sunny Yudkoff, University of Chicago
“Consuming Sholem Aleichem: Disease, Persona, Legacy”
Cosponsored by the Department of German

March 4, 2014
Bernard Wasserstein, University of Chicago
“The Ambiguity of Virtue: Gertrude van Tijn and the Fate of the Dutch Jews”
Cosponsored by the Department of History

April 28, 2014
Orit Bashkin, University of Chicago
“Keeping the Hyphen Alive: Emile Habibi and Iraqi Jews in Israel”
Cosponsored by the Middle East and North African Studies Program

May 16, 2014
Maeera Shreiber, University of Utah
“‘Mohammed, Are You Still Awake?’: Admiel Kosman and the Poetics of Engagement”
Cosponsored by the Department of English



Faculty News

Mira Balberg, assistant professor of religious studies, specializes in ancient Judaism, with a focus on early rabbinic literature. She is the author of *Gateway to Rabbinic Literature* (Open University of Israel, 2013) and *Purity, Body, and Self in Early Rabbinic Literature* (University of California Press, 2014). As a fellow in the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, she is spending the 2014–15 academic year researching the rabbinic construction of sacrifices in the Roman imperial context.

Danny M. Cohen, assistant professor of instruction in the School of Education and Social Policy, is a learning scientist specializing in social constructions of Holocaust memory and victimhood and in the design of Holocaust education. A member of the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission and the editorial advisory board of the journal *The Holocaust in History and Memory*, Cohen also writes human rights fiction for young adults and has been a faculty fellow of the Auschwitz Jewish Center. He was named by Northwestern undergraduates to the 2013–14 Associated Student Government faculty honor roll.

Yakir Englander, postdoctoral fellow in Israel studies and visiting assistant professor of religious studies, is a specialist in modern Jewish philosophy, with a focus on gender issues. His book *Body and Sexuality in the New Religious Zionist Discourse* (coauthored with Avi Sagi) was published in Hebrew in 2013 by Hartman Institute Press and is scheduled to be published in English. His new book, *The Perception of the Male Body in Lithuanian Ultra-Orthodox Society during the Last Sixty Years*, will be published by Hebrew University Press next year.

Peter Fenves, Joan and Sarepta Harrison Professor of Literature, teaches German, comparative literary studies, and Jewish studies and specializes in European literature and philosophy, especially of the late 18th and early 20th centuries. His most recent book, *The Messianic Reduction*, analyzes the early writings of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem from the perspective of their shared interest in phenomenology, neo-Kantianism, mathematics, and certain tendencies in Jewish thought.

Marcia Gealy, associate professor of instruction in the Writing Program, Jewish studies, and comparative literature, has published articles on two of her research interests: the use of the Jewish mystical tradition in the writings of Bernard Malamud and the storytelling tradition in modern and American Jewish literature. She has been recognized for excellence in teaching as a Charles Deering McCormick Distinguished Senior Lecturer and on the 2013–14 Associated Student Government faculty honor roll. She received an Emily Award in June for her advising and service to Women's Residential College.

Edna Grad, distinguished senior lecturer in Hebrew language, is a foreign language education specialist. She speaks four modern languages and has had training in Latin and classical Greek. Among her publications are two Hebrew-teaching packages (books, workbooks, and audio-exercise recordings) for beginning and intermediate-level college students.

Peter Hayes, Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor, specializes in the history of Germany in the 20th century, particularly the Nazi period. He completed work on *How Was It Possible? A Reader on the Holocaust*, due out in early 2015; delivered his annual lecture at the Illinois Holocaust Memorial Museum in December 2013; presented the Meyerhoff Annual Lecture at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in November 2013; and became chair of that institution's academic committee in June 2014. (For more on Hayes, see page 7.)

Lucille Kerr, professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, is interested in 20th-century Latin American literature, Boom and post-Boom literary culture, and Latin American Jewish literature and history. She is the author of *Suspended Fictions: Reading Novels by Manuel Puig* and *Reclaiming the Author: Figures and Fictions from Spanish America*, coeditor of *Teaching the Latin American Boom* (forthcoming), and author/project director of the Latin American Literature and Film Archive.

Jacob Lassner, Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor Emeritus in the Departments of History and Religious Studies, presented “The Transfer and Absorption of Cultural Artifacts in Near Eastern Societies Sharing a Common Past and Present” to the American Schools of Oriental Research and “The Holy Land and Jerusalem in the Imagination of the Prophet and his Companions” to the American Oriental Society in 2013–14. His article “Martyrdom, Self-Sacrifice, and the Quest for Legitimacy in Early Islam” is forthcoming, as is an article titled “The Islamic Toponymy of the Holy Land and Holy City” to appear in the Norman Stillman Festschrift. Lassner is about to complete his 12th book, *The Origins of Islamic Jerusalem: Forging Space in a City Holy to Christians and Jews*, following a trip to the archeological sites of Jerusalem.

Phyllis Lassner, professor of instruction in the Writing Program, gender studies, and Jewish studies, teaches courses in Holocaust representation, including Writing about Children and the Holocaust; Gender, Race, and the Holocaust; and Representing the Holocaust in Literature and Film. She has published widely on interwar and World War II women writers, including her latest book, *Anglo-Jewish Women Writing the Holocaust*, and the essay “Dark Spaces of Holocaust Memory: Second-Generation German Narratives of Desire and Absence.” She created and edits the Northwestern University Press series Cultural Expressions of World War II: Interwar Preludes, Responses, Memory and has been awarded the International Diamond Jubilee Fellowship at Southampton University.

Shaul Mitelpunkt is a historian of United States foreign relations in the 20th century, with particular interests in US-Israeli relations, cultural history, and war and society. Currently a postdoctoral fellow in Israel studies in the history department, he is working on his first book project, “Liberals, War, and Israel: The Cultural Politics of US-Israeli Relations, 1958–1985.” His article on liberal views of the Israeli soldier is forthcoming in a special issue of *Gender and History*.

Marcus Moseley, associate professor of German, specializes in modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature with a strong comparative perspective. He is the author of the first comprehensive history of Jewish autobiography, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies and professor of Jewish history, gave public presentations based on his new books in London, Toronto, Edmonton, New York, Boston, Chicago, Chautauqua (New York), Munich, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv earlier this year. He commented on events in Ukraine on *Chicago Tonight*, CBS, and Al Jazeera. The Ukrainian National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy awarded him an honorary doctorate for his work in Ukrainian Jewish studies. Petrovsky-Shtern published *POLIN: Studies of Polish Jewry* (volume 26, coedited with Antony Polonsky); *Ukrainians and Jews: A Realm of Interaction* (in Ukrainian); and *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe*, which was nominated for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in the general nonfiction category.

Elie Rekhess, Crown Visiting Professor in Israel Studies, associate director for Israel studies, and professor of history, coedited and contributed to *Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Majority Countries: The Islamic Movement in Israel as Test Case* (Tel Aviv University, 2013). He also published “The State of Israel Studies: An Emerging Academic Field” in the *Bloomsbury Companion to Jewish Studies*. He was invited to present a paper at Brandeis University’s conference on Zionism in the 21st century and at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest. He organized and spoke at “The Zionist Ideal in Israeli Culture: Dream and Reality,” an international conference at Northwestern. (For more on the conference, see pages 4–5.) Rekhess was resident director and an instructor during the spring quarter of Northwestern’s Study Abroad Program in Israel.

Kenneth Seeskin, Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization and professor of philosophy and religion, has served as chair of Northwestern’s philosophy department for nearly 20 years and currently serves as chair of the religious studies department as well. His most recent book is *Jewish Messianic Thoughts in an Age of Despair* (2012). Northwestern undergraduates named him to the 2013–14 Associated Student Government faculty honor roll.

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David Shyovitz is an assistant professor of history specializing in medieval and early modern European and Jewish history. His recent articles include “Beauty and the Bestiary: Animals, Wonder, and Polemic in Medieval Ashkenaz” and “Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Werewolf Renaissance.” In 2014–15 he will do research at the National Library of Israel as a Yad Hanadiv visiting fellow in Jewish studies.

Claire Sufrin, visiting professor of American Jewish thought and modern Judaism, focuses on modern Jewish thought in American, European, and Israeli contexts. Her most recent article, “Beyond the Chasm: Religion and Literature after the Holocaust,” appeared in *Thinking Jewish Culture* (Lexington Books, 2014).

Anita Turtletaub, adjunct lecturer in the Department of German, has taught Yiddish at Northwestern since 2008. Her book of original words and music, *Yiddish Songs for Children*, came out in 2012.

Barry Scott Wimpfheimer, associate professor of religious studies and director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, specializes in the Talmud and Jewish law. In 2013–14 he participated in the yearlong workshop “Pedagogies of Engagement in Jewish Studies” at the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University and spoke about perjury in ancient Jewish narratives at the University of Chicago Law School conference “Crime, Law, and Literature.”

Laurie Zoloth, professor of religious studies, teaches Jewish ethics and bioethics, especially the ethics of emerging science, and participates in Scriptural Reasoning, a philosophical project to read the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Koran using analytic discourse. As president of the American Academy of Religion, she is directing the organization to focus research on climate change. She was recently elected a life fellow of Clare Hall at the University of Cambridge. *Jews and Genes: The Genetic Future in Contemporary Jewish Thought*, which she coauthored with Elliot Dorff, will be published this fall by the Jewish Publication Society. She was a member of Northwestern’s John Evans Study Committee, which published its report this year on Evans’s alleged responsibility for the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre.

Graduate Education

Seminar brings Chicago-area Jewish studies programs together

On April 6, 2014, the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies and the University of Chicago’s Jewish Studies Workshop and Chicago Center for Jewish Studies came together on Northwestern’s Evanston campus to present a daylong seminar entitled “Ways of Knowing.” The event, the first attempt to introduce graduate students and faculty of the respective programs, gave the two communities an opportunity to come together around various types of Jewish text. Speakers from Northwestern included faculty members Marcus Moseley, Kenneth Seeskin, and Barry Wimpfheimer; graduate students Grace Overbeke and Sarah Wolf also presented. University of Chicago presenters included faculty members Joseph Stern, Julie Cooper, and Dan Laor.

Postdoctoral fellows

The Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, a partnership between the Crown Family Center, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, and Tel Aviv University, brings in two postdoctoral scholars a year as visiting assistant professors at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. The 2013–14 fellows, Yakir Englander and Shaul Mitelpunkt, had remarkably productive years.

In his second year as a postdoc, Yakir Englander taught the courses *Struggling with God—Creating the Self in Modern Jewish Theology*; *Gender and Existential Aspects in Jewish Mysticism*; and *Judaism and (Non)Violence: Theology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. The last course (see page 6), which drew students with diverse ethnic backgrounds and political views, resulted in a public talk on campus and two student publications.

In addition, Englander worked with a translator on the English version of his book (cowritten with Avi Sagi) *Body and Sexuality in the New Religious Zionist Discourse*. He edited a monograph based on his PhD dissertation in Jewish philosophy and gender studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; it has been accepted for publication in Hebrew by the Hebrew University Press. He also completed eight articles; worked on two more; delivered papers at conferences, seminars, and workshops; and lectured in Jewish communities and at interfaith dialogue gatherings.

Shaul Mitelpunkt arrived for his first year as a postdoctoral fellow after completing a PhD in history at the University of Chicago. He designed and taught *Uncle Sam and Srulik: Culture and Politics in the History of American-Israeli Relations* as well as *Film and Politics in Israeli History*. His article on liberal views of the Israeli soldier is forthcoming in a special issue of *Gender and History*, and he is submitting a manuscript proposal on the cultural politics of US-Israeli relations to various presses.

Mitelpunkt presented papers at Association for Jewish Studies and Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations meetings. He has been active in Crown Center colloquia and in conferences at Northwestern, chairing a panel at the “Zionist Ideal in Israeli

Culture” conference and organizing a panel on film and politics in Israeli history for a fall 2014 workshop “Film and Politics in Israeli History,” at which he will be a presenter. He continues as a postdoc in 2014–15.



2014–15 Crown Graduate Fellowship

The Crown Fellowship has been awarded to Alyssa Henning, a JD-PhD in religious studies candidate whose research takes a distinctly Jewish approach to the ethics of using human subjects for medical research. In particular, she analyzes Jewish narratives using the concept of *lifnim mishurat hadin* (“beyond the letter of the law”) in order to argue that the ethical obligations researchers owe their subjects extend beyond legal or regulatory compliance.

The Crown Center annually awards the fellowship to a Northwestern graduate student or group of students whose work bears on an aspect of Jewish history, culture, or religion. Henning’s fields of study include bioethics, Jewish texts, Jewish thought, religious ethics, and legal theory.

Undergraduate Education

Jewish studies courses, 2013–14

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES

- Loneliness, Eros, and Isolation in Modern Hebrew Literature
Marcus Moseley

ENGLISH

- Writing about Children and the Holocaust
Phyllis Lassner

GENDER STUDIES

- Gender, Race, and the Holocaust
Phyllis Lassner

GERMAN

- Germans and Jews
Peter Fenves

HEBREW

- Hebrew I
Edna Grad
- Hebrew II
Edna Grad
- Hebrew III: Topics in Hebrew Literature
Edna Grad

HISTORY

- Arabs in a Jewish State: The Arab Minority in Israel
Elie Rekhess
- The Blood Libel
David Shyovitz
- Christians and Jews
David Shyovitz
- Early Modern European Jews
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
- Film and Politics in Israeli History
Shaul Mitelpunkt
- Historical Background of the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Jacob Lassner
- Historical Background to the Establishment of Israel: The 1920s–1940s
Elie Rekhess
- History of the Holocaust
Peter Hayes
- Israeli Society: Identity, Nation, and Ethnicity
Elie Rekhess
- Jewish History I: Early Modern, 1492–1789
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
- Jewish History II: 1789–1948
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern



- Jews and Muslims in the Islamic Middle Ages
Jacob Lassner
- Medieval Jewish History
David Shyovitz
- Origins of Zionism
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
- Uncle Sam and Srulik: The Culture and Politics of American-Israeli Relations
Shaul Mitelpunkt

HUMANITIES

- Justice for the Holocaust? Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals
Benjamin Frommer

JEWISH STUDIES

- Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Images of the Shtetl
Marcus Moseley

In spring quarter 2014, Northwestern launched a new study abroad offering in Israel through the Office of International Program Development. The program was directed by Elie Rekhess, associate director, Israel studies. Clockwise from top center: Mural, Tel Aviv; Masada; floating in the Dead Sea.





- Job's Tears: Jewish Responses to Suffering from the Bible to *Maus*
Marcus Moseley
- Modern Jewish Literature in Translation: An Introduction
Marcia Gealy
- Representing the Holocaust in Literature and Film
Phyllis Lassner
- The Rise and Fall of Modern Yiddish Culture
Marcus Moseley
- Storytelling in American Jewish Literature
Marcia Gealy

PHILOSOPHY

- Studies in Modern Philosophy:
Spinoza
Kenneth Seeskin



POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Wendy Pearlman

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

- American Judaism
Claire Sufrin
- The Art of Biblical Narrative
Mira Balberg
- Gender and Existential Aspects in Jewish Mysticism
Yakir Englander
- God after the Holocaust
Claire Sufrin
- Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
Mira Balberg
- Introduction to Judaism
Barry Wimpfheimer
- Judaism and (Non)Violence: Theology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Yakir Englander
- Modern Jewish Thought
Claire Sufrin
- Reading the Talmud
Barry Wimpfheimer
- Struggling with God—Creating the Self in Modern Jewish Theology
Yakir Englander

- Studies in Judaism: Religion and Narrative
Barry Wimpfheimer
- Themes in Comparative Religion
Mira Balberg

YIDDISH

- Beginning Yiddish
Anita Turteltaub
- Intermediate Yiddish
Anita Turteltaub

School of Education and Social Policy

- The Holocaust and Education: The 21st Century
Danny Cohen
- Holocaust Memories, Memorials, and Museums
Danny Cohen

Jewish studies graduates, class of 2014

Natalie Bergner (major)
Matthew Gliebe (major)
Daniel Schuleman (minor)
Julia Wolloch (minor)

**The Crown Family Center
for Jewish and Israel Studies**

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