

# **I** Program in Jewish Culture & Society

2017-2018 Newsletter





# Program in Jewish Culture & Society

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## DEAR FRIENDS,



This has been an incredibly active year for the Program in Jewish Culture & Society and the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies. We have hosted so many lectures, conferences, and film series that my head is spinning! Many of these events are detailed in these pages and I am delighted to report that, with only a few exceptions, most of them were full to capacity. Our reach across campus and the community is growing and, despite the (only recently resolved) budget

crisis, we continue to offer a wide array of courses to undergraduate and graduate students and to encourage reflection and engagement by bringing stellar speakers to campus. We are so grateful to all who make these amazing events possible! Thank you!

We teach between 700 and 1000 students each semester in our combined courses, many of our faculty are consistently listed on the Incomplete List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent, and the Associate Director, Dana Rabin, was awarded the Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Our courses run the gamut from The Bible as Literature, to Soviet Jewish History, to Jews in the Diaspora, to History of Antisemitism, to Jewish Life Writing, to Introduction to Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, to Jewish Sacred Literature, to Readings in Rabbinic Midrash, to Russian-Jewish Culture. We are also delighted to be able to teach Hebrew and Yiddish language courses. The range and

diversity of these classes strengthen our program.

The core faculty work on Russian and Eastern European Studies; Israeli Anthropology, Film, Literature, and Cultural Studies; Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies; Talmud, Hebrew Bible, and Religion; German Jewish philosophy; Jewish Literatures from many parts of the world; Jewish life and literature in Britain, Morocco, Cuba, and other places.

We build on these diverse strengths in myriad ways. For example, three of our core faculty have recently been awarded an Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities cluster grant in New Directions in East European Jewish Culture. This grant includes a reading group, a film series, a workshop, and visiting speakers; it will allow students, faculty, and community members to galvanize their scholarship. A scintillating conference on Women in Israeli Cinema brought together filmmakers and film scholars to

discuss Israeli cinema and gender. The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory studies has been very active and its capstone event was a conference entitled Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide. This one-day event brought together a filmmaker, a photographer, a writer, and literary and cultural studies scholars for an intensive series of discussions about memorializing the still-denied genocide of Armenians. Among the events in Talmud and religion we launched Dov Weiss's book *Pious Irreverence* and enjoyed a large and appreciative audience at Steven Weitzman's talk on the genetic origin of the Jews. We discussed the crucial German Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt through a screening of the fascinating documentary about her life and work, *Vita Activa*. We discussed interactions between Moroccan, Algerian, and French Jews through Maud Mandel's visit and Eric Calderwood's workshop on Moroccan Jews and the Spanish colonial project.

This Jewish Studies program thrives on treating Jewish languages, history and cultures through sometimes counter-intuitive lenses and by including non-traditional scholars and students in our community. New ideas and different voices enrich our learning, our teaching, and our thought. As you can see in these pages we have worked with many units across campus and beyond to bring collaborative projects to fruition.

We are gearing up for another jam-packed year and we hope you will come to our events, enjoy our speakers and conferences, and support our vibrant and growing program!

Next year promises to be especially lively and musical including the Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture visitors Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn and the MillerComm visitor Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell. You won't want to miss these or any of our other events!

I am very grateful to Sam Copeland, our wonderful designer, for his work on this newsletter; a hearty thank you, also, to my friend and neighbor Cecile Steinberg who graciously agreed to help me proof the newsletter! Thank you!

As ever, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me with any questions.

**Brett Ashley Kaplan**



Director, Program in Jewish Culture & Society  
Director, Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, Memory Studies

Brett's books, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (2007) and *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory* (2011), examine the Shoah's intersections with art and space; she has recently published *Jewish Anxiety in the Novels of Philip Roth* (2015) and is working on a project about the intersections of Jewish and black arts and literatures in the U.S. and France.

## NEWS, NOTES, AND CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to graduating Jewish Studies Major Jennifer Schmitt! Congratulations to graduating Jewish Studies Minors Rachel Feldman, Dakota Karson, Abriel Lovelace, and Zipporah Goldenfeld!



Sarah Elder joins us as the new Office Support Specialist. Sarah Elder has been a wonderful addition to the program! In fact nothing would happen without the crucial support that she offers. Sarah joined us in August after working at Carle Hospital and Tepper Electric and has quickly learned all the ins and outs of the complex bureaucracies that are an inherent part of her post. Sarah is a joy to work

with and we are so happy she has come on board.

We are delighted to welcome Comparative Literature Assistant Professor Eric Calderwood to the Jewish Studies Executive Committee. Eric works on the cultural memory of al-Andalus and is interested in the cultural production of the Sephardic diaspora and in literature written by North African Jews living under Spanish and French colonial rule. Please see page 32 for more about Eric.

This year we hosted the annual meeting of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Jewish Studies Directors. We had a small but very dynamic and fruitful meeting at the Illini Center in Chicago. Chip Manekin (Maryland), Mark Roseman (Indiana), Jeffrey Shandler (Rutgers), Claire Sufrin (Northwestern), and I were all there—four other people who were originally planning to come had to cancel! We brainstormed about ideas to connect the Jewish Studies programs across BTAA. We discussed beginning a thematically focused rotating

biennial graduate conference at which graduate students from any of the Jewish Studies programs could present their work and BTAA Jewish Studies directors could serve as respondents on the panels so that graduate students could share ideas and learn from faculty. We also discussed holding the BTAA meetings to coordinate with the Association for Jewish Studies Annual conference since most of us attend that conference every year. We hope to create an online presence that lists all of our events to foster coordination of speakers and performers who grace our respective campuses. We also talked about increasing student use of the BTAA course share system. Through this system students can already take courses at their home institutions but interface in real time with pupils across the BTAA. We hope that small courses can be expanded through this system and we are working on broadcasting our diverse classes across the BTAA. There is much more to think through and implement but we made a good start!



With Jeffrey Shandler, Claire Sufrin, Charles Manekin, and Mark Roseman

Our program wrote a response to an article about antisemitism on campus and it was published in the Champaign-Urbana based News-Gazette. You can find it [here](#)

HGMS was featured on NPR and you can hear the interview [here](#)

Dov Weiss was interviewed by both VBM in Phoenix and the New Books Network; you can find the interviews [here](#)

# FALL 2017-SPRING 2018

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

**Monday, September 11 • 12PM**

**THE CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY IN KIBBUTZ NARRATIVE**

**Ranen Omer-Sherman**, University of Louisville  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Tuesday, September 19**

**7PM • THE INTERNATIONALE: DIALECTICAL POLYGLOTT KLEZMER CABARET**

**Psoy Korolenko and Daniel Kahn**  
Location: *Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Stage 5*  
Krouse Family Visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture  
**12PM • Jewish Studies Workshop**  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Wednesday, September 27**

**5PM • "INTOXICATIONS OF THE BLOOD": RITUAL MURDER AND OTHER FANTASIES OF THE SAVAGE SELF IN MODERN CENTRAL EUROPE**

**Scott Spector**, University of Michigan  
Rosenthal Family Endowment  
Location: *Lincoln Hall Room 1064*  
**12PM • Jewish Studies Workshop, Sigmund Freud Between 'Jewish Science' and Humanism**  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Monday, October 2**

**5PM • RUIN THE SACRED TRUTH: THE PROBLEM OF THE TORAH FOR RELIGION AND LITERATURE**

**Seth Sanders**, University of California, Davis  
Samuel and Sheila Goldberg Lectureship Fund  
Location: *Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building 1080*  
**12PM • Jewish Studies Workshop**  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Monday, October 9 • 5PM**

**HGMS SCREENING - THE DESTRUCTION OF MEMORY**

Filmmaker **Tim Slade** Skyping in for Q & A  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 304*

**Monday, October 16 • 7:15PM**

**AN EVENING WITH DORIT RABINYAN**

Location: *Alice Campbell Hall*

**Tuesday, October 17 • 7PM**

**FILM SCREENING**

Location: *Hillel*

**Monday, October 30 • 12PM**

**THE USE OF NARRATIVE IN POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING**

**Tim Wedig**, University of Illinois  
HGMS Faculty Seminar  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Monday, November 6 • 5PM**

**JAMES FRIEDMAN'S "12 NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS"**

Panel discussion with **James Friedman, Gary Weissman, and Brett Kaplan**  
Inaugural Greenfield Lynch event  
Location: *Lucy Ellis Lounge, Foreign Languages Building 1080*  
Illini Union art gallery for the month of November with projected images from 12 Nazi Concentration Camps

**Thursday, November 9 • 12PM**

**ILLUSTRATING HISTORY: MAUS, MEMORY, AND ME**

**Mara Thacker**  
in conjunction with the Department of History  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Monday, November 13 • 12PM**

**PUSHKIN IN JEWISH CULTURE**

**Sara Feldman**, University of Illinois  
Jewish Studies Workshop  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Wednesday, November 29 • 4PM**

**POTENTIAL HISTORY OF THE ARCHIVE: THE MICRO STUDY OF A MACRO INSTITUTION**

**Ariella Azoulay**, Brown University  
Location: *MillerComm Spurlock Museum*  
**12PM • HGMS Faculty Seminar,**  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Monday, December 4 • 12PM**

**"WHERE WAS GOD?"**

**Peter Fritzsche**, University of Illinois  
HGMS faculty seminar  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*

**Thursday, January 25 • 5PM**

**INTERNMENT AND DESTRUCTION: CONCENTRATION CAMPS DURING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE, 1915-1917**

**Khatchig Mouradian, Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian** Visiting Professor at Columbia University  
Location: *TBD*

**Monday, February 12 • 12PM**

**Anke Pinkert**, German, UIUC  
HGMS Faculty Workshop

**Tuesday, February 20 • 7:30PM**

**CONVERGENCE: SPIRITUALS FROM THE SHTETL. DAVENING FROM THE DELTA.**

**Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell**  
Location: *MillerComm Spurlock Museum*

**Monday, April 9 • 5PM**

**JEW FOR JIHAD? JEWISH CITIZENS IN AN ISLAMIC EMPIRE**

**Julia Cohen**, Vanderbilt University  
**12PM • Jewish Studies Workshop, The Past as a Foreign Country: Sephardi Jews and the Spanish Past**  
Location: *English Bldg, Room 109*  
Oscar and Rose A. Einhorn Fund

## RON FILLER AND THE FILLER AWARD



We are so grateful to Ron Filler for his generosity! Here is the story of how he came to so generously offer this award to deserving Jewish Studies minors or

majors. It was a great pleasure to meet Ron at the Filler Award dinner last year and I look forward to welcoming future awardees.

Ron Filler: "I grew up in Union City, TN. For several years, we were the only Jewish family in this small town in NW Tennessee. My father drove my brothers and me every Sunday to Cairo, IL so we could attend Sunday School and meet other young Jewish people. It was a 120-mile round trip. The temple in Cairo did not have a rabbi but a student rabbi from the rabbinical school in Cincinnati came once a month and again over the high holy days to teach us. It was my only exposure to being Jewish at that time but is

a feeling and belief that I have kept and applied throughout my life. To me, Judaism is more than a religion; it's a strong internal feeling. While I never had a formal Jewish education, I am so honored that my family can assist those who are majoring or minoring in Jewish Studies at the University of Illinois. I am a strong believer that everyone, if they can, should provide financial assistance to the young people in this country, especially those who are academically gifted, so they can graduate from a great university with less financial school debt. As of now, there are over 85 Filler Scholars at Illinois. My goal is to provide financial aid for over 150 Illini."

## ARIA TOULOUHAS WINS THE FILLER AWARD



My name is Aria Tsoulouhas, and I am a junior studying Jewish Studies and Classics (Greek). I grew up in Cary, North Carolina, but both of my parents went to the U of I for graduate school, so I decided to follow in their footsteps!

I initially began my studies as a Comparative Literature major, but I decided to take A History of Judaism with Dr. Dov Weiss during the first semester of my freshman year, and I quickly fell in love with the study of Jewish thought and theology. Professor Weiss is infectiously enthusiastic about his field and, in many ways, I have

him to thank for sparking my interest in Jewish Studies. I have since taken many classes with him, including Introductory Readings of the Talmud, Medieval Jewish Thought, and A History of Early Judaism. Of these classes, I believe Introductory Readings of the Talmud was my favorite. We studied the Tractate Sanhedrin, with our primary area of focus being the stubborn and rebellious son, or the *ben sorer umoreh*. I won't spoil the answer to the question of when a stubborn and rebellious son is liable to punishment, but I can tell you that it's quite the curveball. I thoroughly enjoyed piecing together the

*halakha* behind the *baraitoth* and the arguments of various rabbis, analyzing rabbinic interpretations of biblical passages, and pointing out contradictions and inconsistencies within the text. I would take another Talmud class in a heartbeat.

My time as a Jewish Studies major has also been defined by my study of Hebrew, both Biblical and modern. I took my first semester of Biblical Hebrew with Dr. Bruce Rosenstock, whose penchant for song made the class infinitely more enjoyable (I can still sing the first five verses of Genesis to the tune of the song "Bereshit" by the Moshav Band). Biblical Hebrew is both beautiful and vexing,

and my experience as a Jewish Studies major is continually enriched by my ability to read the Tanakh in its original form. I have also taken Modern Hebrew with Dr. Sara Feldman, and I have loved every minute of it. There really is nothing like the experience of learning a revived language, and it's always fascinating to see the characteristics Modern Hebrew shares with some European languages. For all the aforementioned reasons, I am eager to advance my knowledge of both Biblical and Modern Hebrew, as they are both gateways to the world of Jewish Studies.

My primary interests in the field of Jewish Studies are Jewish theology, medieval

Jewish thought, Kabbalistic thought (particularly Lurianic), Chasidic thought, and Judaism in the Graeco-Roman period. I feel that, thus far, my time as a Jewish Studies major at the U of I has pushed me towards a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of Judaism and of the Jewish people. I am forever amazed by the boundless depth of the Jewish tradition, and I could not envision myself studying anything else.

## PAYTON HEYEN, FILLER AWARD WINNER FALL 2017



I am a junior in the History department and I am pursuing a minor in Jewish Studies. To date, I have completed coursework in History, Jewish Studies, Political Science and various other fields. In addition to my regular student status, I am on the executive board of two RSOs, a James Scholar, a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honors Society.

Throughout my time at the University of Illinois, I have developed a deep passion for the study of Jewish Culture and

Society. At the University, I have taken courses on the introduction to Judaism, pre-modern Jewish history, and the Holocaust. I also frequently attend guest lectures and events hosted by the Jewish Studies department. This fall I will be delving into literary responses to the Holocaust and beginning preliminary research for my Senior Honors Thesis. My thesis will highlight the similarities and differences between American immigration policies in regards to European Jews pre-World War II and those involved in the Syrian refugee crisis of today.



## OFIRA FUCHS AND JESSICA YOUNG AWARDED THE GENDELL FAMILY AND SHINER FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

*We are so grateful to the Gendell and Shiner Families for supporting this important scholarship!*



### OFIRA FUCHS

My dissertation, “Reforming the State: Orthodoxy, Change and Jewish Religious Activism in Israel,” investigates how Orthodox Jews re-envision the Jewishness of the Israeli state and society. The project is based on anthropological fieldwork in Jerusalem among Orthodox Jews that propose moderate alternatives to institutional Jewish religiosity in Israel through activism and through modifying religious practices in Orthodox congregations. I argue that their efforts to reshape internally Orthodox society and externally

influence broader Israeli society create new modes of being a “religious Jew” in today’s Israel. In light of increasing scholarly attention to religious extremism and fundamentalism, I focus on the formation of a moderate religiosity that is nevertheless political and devout. Ultimately, my study traces ways that moderate Orthodox Jews reconfigure the continuous tension between Israel’s self-identification as both a Jewish state and a democracy.



### JESSICA YOUNG

My dissertation, “Migrating Memories: Power and Transcultural Memory in Contemporary South Asian Fiction,” traces the transmission of memories within and between marginalized groups whose histories are often omitted from traditional sites of memory and commemoration. Drawing upon fiction by Amitav Ghosh, Hari Kunzru, Mohsin Hamid, and Bharati Mukherjee, I locate both real and imagined spaces where, against the odds, suppressed memories travel across national and cultural borders to create new political coalitions based upon shared traumatic pasts. Ultimately, I explore how

difficult global histories are preserved and connected in contemporary South Asian novels, transforming not only our perceptions of the past, but also our understanding of the present and hopes for a more ethical and inclusive future.

For a beautiful review of the art exhibit “From Generation to Generation” written by Jessica see the HGMS blog: <http://hgmsblog.weebly.com/blog/what-we-owe-the-past-a-review-of-from-generation-to-generation-inherited-memories-and-contemporary-art>

# AIN KEMACH, AIN TORAH MICHAEL SHAPIRO, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM IN JEWISH CULTURE & SOCIETY



Michael Shapiro and Gary Porton at the spring reception and awards ceremony

*A slightly revised version of my remarks at the Jewish Studies Spring Reception and Awards Ceremony on May 12, 2017*

My title is a saying of the ancient rabbis. The literal translation is “no flour, no Torah.” That is, without economic support from the community, there can be no serious study of Judaism. Jewish studies at UIUC was not “always there,” nor did it fall from the sky. It was created by a dedicated group of faculty, nurtured by several visionary administrators, and partially funded by generous members of the Jewish community.

In the Beginning, that is, in the late 1970s, a half-dozen or so professors, led by Fred Gottheil, met informally to discuss the possibility of Jewish studies at UIUC. Their timing was excellent. The trustees had recently established a Program for the Study of Religion so we suddenly had professors in Judaica and in Hebrew Bible,

while the Department of Linguistics was now offering courses in Modern Hebrew. But Gottheil’s group worried that without courses in such fields as Jewish history and literature, there could be no program in Jewish studies. As a new member of the group, I, a Shakespearean from the Department of English, sought advice from Ed Sullivan, Associate Director of the School of Humanities (then a subdivision of LAS). He urged us to list anyone on campus, besides the new hires, who might offer relevant courses and then to see what other universities offered under the rubric of Jewish studies. I was surprised to discover that we actually had the nucleus of a respectable Jewish studies program. Together with Gary Porton, our newly tenured specialist in Judaic studies, I submitted a proposal to Nina Baym, director of the School of Humanities. She appointed us to co-chair an ad hoc Committee on Jewish Culture and Society, charged with exploring the feasibility of

creating a unit in Jewish studies. After we used her seed money to purchase letterhead, to paraphrase Descartes, “We had stationery; therefore we existed.”

Gary and I agreed that at a large public university with strengths in history, literature, languages, and other key areas, Jewish studies would do best as an interdisciplinary unit with faculty drawn from other departments. We coined the phrase, “Jewish Culture and Society” to signify that Jewish studies at UIUC would comprise core courses in Judaica and courses exploring the cultural exchange between Jews and their surrounding societies.

Once Nina put us on the map, the Library allocated funds to expand its holdings in Jewish studies. Dean Jesse Delia of LAS provided an administrative assistant, later raised our status from ad hoc committee to Program and kept us afloat during a financial crisis. Chancellor Richard Herman helped us establish a new position in Israel studies. “Flour” also came from outside the university, much of it due to the work of UIUC development officers such as Natalie Handley. The local Jewish Federation, led by Dr. Daniel Bloomfield, also allocated funds for public lectures, while Michael Kotzin, a V-P of the Chicago Jewish Federation, helped us create the Israel Studies Project to bring scholars and artists from Israel to campus each year. The family names attached to endowed chairs, fellowships, lectures, prizes, and special library acquisitions—e.g., Tobor Margolis, Einhorn, Vivian Marcus,

Goldberg, Krouse, Rosenthal, Gendell and Shiner, Karasik, Filler, and Drobny—all testify to the vision and generosity of supporters of our project, along with a devoted Advisory Council in greater Chicago.

Since Gary and I retired, new leaders, first Matti Bunzl and then Brett Kaplan, took the helm and several new faculty members joined the crew, and we have watched with pride as the Program has grown. We are especially pleased to note the expansion of the Jewish studies minor, the scholarly achievements of the faculty,

even wider participation of faculty throughout the campus, and the vibrant series of lectures, workshops and films. We are confident that the Program has the intellectual resources to meet the challenges of the future, and we trust that it will continue to enjoy the *kemach*, the continued support of administrators and friends.

After receiving his doctorate from Columbia University, Michael Shapiro spent the bulk of his career at the University of Illinois. He was also a visiting professor at Reading (England), Cornell, Tamkang

(Taiwan), and Loyola (Chicago). At UIUC he was a member of the English Department, where he taught courses in Shakespeare and early modern drama and literature, and was co-founder and director of the Program in Jewish Culture and Society, for which he taught courses in modern Jewish literature. He was also the co-founder and artistic director of the Revels Players, an amateur theatrical troupe dedicated to producing early modern classic plays. He is the author of books and articles on Elizabethan drama. See page 18 for more on one of his new books.

## EUGENE AVRUTIN ON KROUSE FAMILY VISITING SCHOLAR IN JUDAISM AND WESTERN CULTURE MASHA GESSEN'S VISIT

Masha Gessen, one of the world's leading journalists and critics of contemporary Russian culture and politics, is a frequent

contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Harper's*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New*

*Yorker*, and other publications. Gessen undergoes great personal risk to write truthfully about human rights violations, humanitarian values, and the current cultural and political climate in Russia. Over the years, Gessen has received numerous prestigious awards for her work, including the 2015 Raoul Wallenberg Medal from the University of Michigan and the 2015-16 Carnegie Millennial Fellowship.

She has authored some of the most influential books on contemporary Russian culture and politics. *The Man Without a Face* describes how a low-level, small-minded KGB operative ascended to the Russian presidency. The book has been translated into several languages. In *The Brothers: The Road to an American Tragedy*, Gessen





Masha Gessen, center, at workshop on *Where the Jews Aren't*



follows the Tsarnaev family in their futile attempts to make a life for themselves in one war-torn locale after another and then, as new émigrés, in the disorienting world of Cambridge, Massachusetts. In *Ester and Ruzya: How My Grandmothers Survived Hitler's War and Stalin's Peace*, Masha chronicles two young Jewish women's journeys of survival.

Gessen gave the CAS/MillerComm lecture, "Retrofitting Totalitarianism in Putin's Russia," on Tuesday, October 25, at the Spurlock Museum, to a capacity audience of over 200 people. Since starting his third presidential term in March 2012, Vladimir Putin has refashioned himself as an ideological leader. His ideology is that of "traditional values." Masha Gessen told the story of the creation of that ideology, beginning with the antigay campaign, ballooning into a civilizational mission, and culminating with war—whether in Ukraine or in Syria, it is against the United States. The creation of ideology went hand-in-

hand with a political crackdown—the arrests of peaceful protesters, the attack on NGOs—and together, they set in motion a process unlike any we have ever seen. The mechanisms of life under totalitarianism kicked back in, often apparently set in motion at the ground level rather than imposed from the top.

In addition to the MillerComm lecture, Gessen participated in activities to benefit the academic community and the wider public. On the afternoon of October 26, the IPRH, in conjunction with its "Publics" theme, hosted a lively conversation between Gessen and Christopher Benson, Professor of Journalism at the University of Illinois. The two talked about the changing environment of journalism today; the ways that global social media shapes narratives of geopolitics; the payoffs and perils of being a critic as well as a reporter of the news; and the challenges of keeping up with the 24-7 news cycle. This was a unique opportunity to hear first-hand

how two journalists think about the state of media coverage at a key moment in the US election cycle—and at a time when the world order seems on the verge of a paradigm shift. Furthermore, the Program in Jewish Culture and Society organized a discussion of Gessen's most recent book, *Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan*, attended by a diverse group of professors and graduate students.

Gessen's visit could not have been more timely given the frequency with which Russia has been featured in the news since the fall. She offered a vibrant and thought-provoking series of events that were well received by multiple communities on and off campus and which primed us to understand the current news from Russia.

See page 32 for a bio and photo of Eugene Avrutin.

# A FILM OF HER OWN: WOMEN IN ISRAELI CINEMA

## RACHEL S. HARRIS' REFLECTIONS ON A SPRING SYMPOSIUM

In the Spring I hosted the symposium *A Film of Her Own: Women in Israeli Cinema* at the iHotel. More than one hundred people turned up for the opening events that included lectures, a film screening, and a banquet dinner. Though the eighteen scholars and filmmakers brought together represent how the industry has become active in championing women, scholarship has not had the same centralized focus as the activists and documentary filmmakers, and this was the first symposium of its kind to spotlight feminism, women's filmmaking and the cinema happening in Israel.

During the academic papers there was such strong attendance we had to borrow chairs from another room! The events tied in to International Women's Day and following the symposium Michal Aviad and Smadar Zamir appeared at Temple Beth El in Northbrook as part of their Israeli film series in partnership with the Chicago Festival of Israeli Film. Smadar spoke at the start of the event to introduce the topic, the film was screened and then Michal Aviad offered a Q & A. More than 150 people attended. For an event held in the middle of the day – it started at 1:15pm—this is an extraordinary turnout. This was a great opportunity to bring the work of the academy into the community and to showcase women's important contribution to Israeli cinema.

The symposium is my response to the growth of women led filmmaking in Israel since the mid 1990s, and the often

explicit feminist agenda that much of the filmmaking has taken this century. There has been no single individual or movement at the forefront of this change, but neither has it been entirely organic. The efforts of numerous individuals were needed to ensure the creation of fertile ground. Of central importance in helping new shoots flourish were Anat Shperling and the Rehovot International Women's Film Festival (of which Michal Aviad was the first artistic director), and the Film Forum for Israeli Women television and filmmakers, a group of women activists who have plugged away at Israeli cinema's infrastructure to create a space for women.

As a guest of the Israel Studies Project this spring, and our keynote speaker, Michal Aviad reflected on the growth of women-led projects and the turn towards being more active as feminists that led to the Forum's creation. An award winning director, scriptwriter, and producer, Aviad is also senior lecturer at the Department of Film and Television at Tel Aviv University, where she is Head of the MFA Program. Aviad has been making films for thirty years and her focus has been on women and their complex relationships with society. Many of her documentaries examine women's experience of the Arab Israeli conflict and Zionist history and consider the unique perspective of women that changes our vantage point on topics we often feel we know intimately. Her work frequently strikes at cultural taboos and she has made films

about aging, sexual violence (including the feature film *Lo Roim Aleich (Invisible, 2011)*), national violence, poverty, and the intifadas.

The symposium opened with Smadar Zamir, also a guest of the Israel Studies Project and founding member of the Film Forum. She writes extensively in the press on women's filmmaking and has been engaged in putting together a multimedia project and documentary film *Israeli Cinema- Her Story*, that aims to rewrite the History of Israeli Cinema from a female perspective. Orly Lubin set out a fundamental principle for the consideration of feminism and cinema – that texts that purport to be feminist may not be, and that texts that appear to be entrenched within masculinist hegemony may in fact prove to be feminist. It is not enough to consider the number of women on screen, or whether women have been involved in the filmmaking process to judge a film as a feminist text, but it must be read within not only cinematic language (shot, costume, lighting, framing, editing, and camera angles), but also in terms of the way the film situates the discussion of women within the larger political, social, anthropological and historical contexts in which it is produced. This principle underpins scholarship on Israeli cinema and feminism – including my own work which has led to the forthcoming book *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne State Press, 2017). This book examines how Israeli cinema can be read as feminist;



for example, does having women play traditionally male roles such as soldiers make a film feminist? When men film women's domestic lives does this recover the forgotten history of women's experience or is it just an opportunity to film naked women?

This symposium followed from my own work by considering three major aspects: first, looking at the many new films by female directors; second, considering how changes within the industry and women's activism help women make these films; third, considering how we can begin to rethink scholarship from a feminist perspective by challenging our basic tools, which were first developed to consider films made by, about, and for men.

Given these broad aims, it was important to bring together scholars from a wide range of fields including those working outside Israeli cinema. The majority of feminist scholarship on cinema in Israel has been taking place in Gender Studies and literature departments and not in

Cinema Studies. As Women's Studies and Women's Film Studies continue to develop apace in the wider scholarly community, they have been siloed within the Israeli academy. At the same time, Israeli cinema has become an international phenomenon, garnering much public acclaim, winning prizes on the international circuits, appearing at international film festivals and media platforms including the ever more popular Netflix. Cinema programs (both filmmaking and Cinema Studies) are booming in Israel.

This growth of women's filmmaking and film scholarship is part of a global trend that exists beyond the boundaries of this one small – though fascinating – country. The symposium brought these different scholarly directions into dialogue with one another. Many of the papers explored women led film projects – regarding the aesthetics, directions, and stories that women are telling in the Israeli film industry. Some addressed particularly how women use their social and cultural capital to engage in explicitly political

projects, such as discussions of women's experiences of violence, and restrictive treatment under male authorities. And some of the papers considered how Israeli women's work can be read in light of larger global trends in feminist filmmaking and women's activism through film. The symposium provided an opportunity for us to lay out major trajectories in Israeli feminist film scholarship for the coming years and to read it in relation to other scholarly fields of engagement including Women's Studies, Women's Film Studies and Israeli Film Studies. I hope that we can see this as a start for launching an ongoing conversation.

The symposium was supported by: LAS, SLCL, Middle Eastern Studies, Jewish Studies, Comparative Literature, Illinois International, the JUF, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, the Israel Institute, and Academic Engagement Network.

See page 33 for a bio and photo of Rachel Harris.



## DALE BAUER ON SUSAN BERNSTEIN'S WORKSHOP: JEWISH DEATH THINKING: AMY LEVY AND ANZIA YEZIERSKA

Susan David Bernstein, formerly Professor of English at UW-Madison and now at Boston University, provided a fascinating workshop on Jewish death cultures on September 19, 2016. Bernstein is a British Victorianist, whose published books include *Confessional Subjects* (1997), *Roomscape: Women Writers in the Reading Room from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (2013) and editions of Amy Levy's novels, *The Romance of a Shop* (2006) and *Reuben Sachs* (2006). She has also published essays on transatlantic writing, feminist theory, and Victorian culture. In her writing on Levy, the first Jewish student at Newnham College, Cambridge, Bernstein points to Levy's signs of mourning, from shutters closed to drawn blinds to indicate the "accepting and remembering" to mark our grieving. Her larger interest in this New Woman novel lies in Levy's passionate commitment to women's work and the possibilities of women's careers.

Focusing on two writers, Amy Levy (1861-1889) and Anzia Yezierska (1880-1970), Bernstein presented a slideshow about their lives and deaths, along with elucidating the ideas of *chevra kadisha* and the rituals surrounding death, including the rending of clothes and sitting shiva. This was a significant issue for her London reform Jewish community. Levy

died from charcoal asphyxiation, and her suicide presented several important issues for that community. Levy was also cremated after her death. In contrast, Yezierska died of a stroke in 1970 in Ontario, California. As Bernstein writes, "Respect for the dying and dead (*k'vod hamet*), and care for those in mourning (*nichum avelim*), shape Jewish traditions. Just as *Yizkor*, the memorial prayer chanted four times a year in synagogue services, is about remembering those who have died, the very word 'yizkor' means 'to remember.' The ritual around the annual *yahrzeit*, the anniversary date of the death, is another act of remembrance. Instead of heaven or hell, Jewish death thinking is also about the blessing of remembering a loved one."

Bernstein's talk is part of her newest project on death thinking. She began the workshop and her essay with this significant question: "How did two Jewish women writers think about, imagine, and create fiction and poetry around death?" Bernstein describes her critical interest in the question of when "Jewish death thinking" began: it did so with "Levy who died by suicide at the age of twenty seven when her literary career was soaring. By her own request, Levy's body was cremated, under the auspices of the synagogue her family attended. I was curious about what cremation meant in Judaism and in London at that time, and if her request for cremation could be related to her ideas about death. With Yezierska, her attitude about death culture and mourning customs in *Bread Givers* is a consequence of her social striving as an





assimilated American woman, but her understanding of death itself coincides with Jewish death thinking too. In contrast, Levy's death thinking led to changes in Anglo-Jewish practices."

Following her death in September 1889, Levy was the first Jewish woman in British history whose body was cremated— just four years after the first cremation of a human body took place there. Levy's

ashes, once released from the Woking Crematorium, were buried, rather than scattered, in a ceremony in Balls Pond Cemetery conducted by the West London Synagogue in Berkeley Street to which her family belonged.

The audience for this workshop responded with a series of incisive questions about the rules of Jewish burial cemeteries such as Balls Pond Cemetery and how

geography matters to the idea of Jewish death culture; they also asked questions about Levy's assimilation and Jewish ideas of suicide and burial. This was a rich and lively discussion of a topic that is often shunted aside but whose elaboration sheds light on a host of questions from assimilation to mourning.

See page 32 for a bio and photo of Dale Bauer.

## BRUCE ROSENSTOCK AND BRETT KAPLAN ON GOLDBERG LECTURE: REFLECTIONS ON THE DOUBLE HELIX OF JEWISH HISTORY: GENETICS AND THE SEARCH FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWS, STEVEN WEITZMAN

This year's Goldberg lecture was very special indeed. Steven Weitzman is the Abraham M. Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Literatures in the Department of Religious Studies and the Ella Darivoff Director of the Katz Center of Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. We are so grateful to the Goldberg family and to all the sponsors for making this event possible!

Professor Weitzman is a biblical scholar of incredible range. Not only has he made impressive contributions to the study of the Hebrew Bible, including his first book entitled *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative*, in which he examines

the way that poetry has been woven into many of the narrative sections of the Bible, but Professor Weitzman has pursued the afterlife of biblical narratives throughout history. *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom* (Yale, 2011) offers not only a penetrating reading of the figure of Solomon as it appears in the Hebrew Bible but also a history of the restless quest for knowledge that is Solomon's legacy to the Western literary and philosophical tradition. Professor Weitzman has also made important contributions to our knowledge of the Second Temple period. *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Harvard, 2005), offers a study of how Jews during the time of the Second Temple coped with the

reality of their loss of political independence and managed to forge a durable sense of identity around their resistance to cultural assimilation while at the same time remaining open to the outside world. His most recent book is *The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless World* (Princeton, 2017). This text harnesses the resources of modern genetics and combines what science can teach us with a history of how previous generations of Jews and non-Jews have thought about Jewish origins.

The lecture he delivered at Spurlock was drawn from this newest work. Weitzman argues that genetics does not hold the answer to Jewish identity, although there



Steven Weitzman (center) with faculty and students





Courtesy of The Spurlock Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

are a number of heritable traits (like Tay Sachs) that seem statistically more prevalent among (certain groups of) Jews. More interesting than developing a list of such heritable traits is the question about why Jews and non-Jews seem to want to locate a genetic or heritable “essence” of Jewishness. This is due, perhaps, to the ambiguity in Jewish identity, its being both an ethnicity and a way of life that individuals from other ethnicities can join.

As Weitzman puts it: “Many people assume they know the origin of the Jews, tracing them back to the ancestors described in the book of Genesis, but for scholars, the origin of the Jews remains a mystery. Even after centuries of investigation, they still haven’t settled on a single theory or reconstruction to account for the origin of the Jews, and research into the question continues.” His talk explored the “scholarly quest to understand the origin of the Jews, focusing on the use of genetics as a new source of evidence. What does recent study of DNA

reveal about the ancestry of the Jews, and why has this kind of research provoked so much criticism and controversy? Presented from the perspective of a scholar of ancient Judaism rather than a scientist, the lecture [examined] what genetic research reveals about the origin(s) of the Jews and [wrestled] with the challenges of using DNA as a historical source.”

The Spurlock museum’s Knight auditorium was almost full and after the talk we hosted a lovely reception at CAS’s new space in the Levis center (and we are very grateful to CAS and especially to Masumi Iriye for offering their space). Many members of the community as well as Jewish studies minors and majors, graduate students, and faculty enjoyed a wonderful meal together.

In conjunction with the lecture, the Spurlock museum curated a beautiful exhibit featuring many of the precious Judaica objects in its collection. These included several ancient maps, Torah scrolls, and

other objects of interest—as the curators noted: “We occasionally get glimpses of [ethnogenesis] through cultural artifacts, ancient and historic texts, and people’s explanations of particular practices.” More information about and images of the exhibit can be found here: <http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/exhibits/profiles/foc-judaica.html>

We are so grateful to the following for supporting this spectacular event: Samuel and Sheila Goldberg Lectureship Fund, CAS, Spurlock Museum, Institute for Genomic Biology, and Department of Religion.

See page 33 for a bio and photo of Bruce Rosenstock.

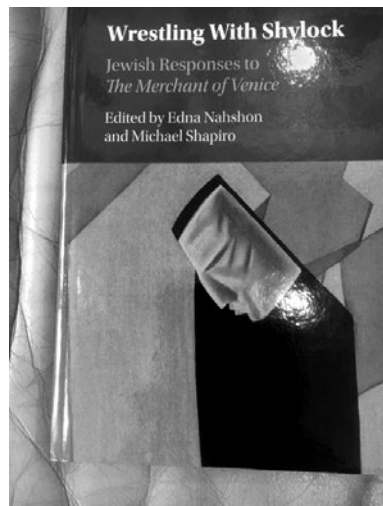
## MICHAEL SHAPIRO DISCUSSES HIS NEW BOOK LOOK OUT FOR A BOOK LAUNCH NEXT YEAR!

*Wrestling With Shylock: Jewish Responses to The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Michael Shapiro and Edna Nahshon (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

A fair amount has been written about what Shakespeare and his contemporaries thought of Jews, but much less work has been done on the question of what Jews thought of Shakespeare, specifically about his only Jewish character, Shylock, and the play in which he appears, *The Merchant of Venice*. That situation is now changing. At the end of March, I was in London for a conference on “Shakespeare and the Jews” held at University College of London University, at which a number of scholars explored ways in which Jews have dealt with Shakespeare’s works. On the second day of the conference, I was delighted to attend the launch of a book I co-edited with Edna Nahshon, a theater historian who teaches at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. The book, which was published by Cambridge University Press, is entitled *Wrestling With Shylock: Jewish Responses to The Merchant of Venice*. It is a collection of essays by an international team of scholars who explore the various ways in which Jewish community leaders, actors, directors, critics, dramatists, and adapters have dealt with the play in such languages as English, German, Yiddish, and Hebrew.

The opening chapter of the book explains Shylock’s origins. He first appears as the nameless Jewish moneylender in the Italian novella that Shakespeare turned into

a romantic comedy. Among the changes he made was to enrich the Jewish texture of the play by giving the character a name, a family, a community, a smattering of Judaic knowledge, and a distinctive voice. As the villain of the piece, Shylock threatens to cut a pound of flesh, his collateral, from the breast of a borrower who has defaulted on a loan—but he is prevented from doing so. In the course of the play, he is reviled, spat upon, and



mocked; his daughter elopes with a Christian; and he is fleeced of his wealth and ordered, on pain of death, to convert to Christianity. The crucial question is whether Shakespeare is endorsing the anti-Semitism of the Christian characters, or merely dramatizing it, and perhaps even condemning it. Whereas many of Shakespeare’s contemporaries would have seen the Jewish villain in the light of current anti-Semitic prejudice, by the 19th century a more sympathetic view of the character emerged in England and

Germany. Despite this later tendency to humanize Shylock, his name (often without reference to the play itself) has become a by-word for stinginess, sharp business practice, stubborn legalism, and vengefulness throughout the English-speaking world. The question of Shakespeare’s intentions and those of later interpreters runs through every chapter of *Wrestling With Shylock*, along with the answers to it embodied in stage productions, theatrical adaptations and spin-offs, prose adaptations, operatic versions, critical commentaries, and even a painting of Shylock and his daughter.

Several chapters discuss treatments of the play in Yiddish and Hebrew. It is hard to imagine that Shakespeare could have anticipated the play being performed by Jewish actors in a Jewish language before Jewish spectators. That would be as inconceivable to him as a production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in Fairyland. But the play was performed in the Yiddish theaters of New York and in Hebrew translations in Mandatory Palestine and after 1948 in Israel, despite the objections of political and religious leaders to its depiction of Shylock. Several chapters explore Jewish responses that invoke the Holocaust by setting the play in Mussolini’s Italy or Hitler’s Germany, and by raising the question of whether, in the long shadow cast by Auschwitz, the play can or should be performed at all.

I contributed a chapter on a sequel to the play—a novel by Jewish-American writer Ludwig Lewisohn entitled *The Last Days*

of *Shylock* (1931). Lewisohn imagines Shylock's early life in the Venetian ghetto, reinterprets the events of the play from his point of view, and then inserts the character into a little-known episode of Jewish history. Spirited away from Venice to Turkey by some wealthy Sephardic Jews who have persuaded the Sultan to sponsor a Jewish colony on the shores of Lake Tiberias, Shylock agrees to help administer this project, which resembles Palestine under the British Mandate,

where Jewish settlements aroused the wrath of the local Arab population while British troops tried to keep peace. When the colony fails, Shylock returns to Turkey to help resettle boatloads of Jewish refugees from Italy, including (to his surprise) his estranged daughter, Jessica, and her three sons, with whom he is reconciled.

Although the book casts a very wide net, it can not possibly address all of the Jewish responses to the play, both legalistic

and artistic, for the play continues to arouse controversy, to have a life of its own on the stage, in the classroom, and in the minds of readers, and to serve as a lens through which to view the on-going stream of Jewish history.

See page 9-10 for a bio and photo of Michael Shapiro.

## SARA FELDMAN ON PERFORMING YIDDISH CULTURE

On Monday, September 12, 2016, the Program in Jewish Culture and Society enjoyed a unique lecture-concert by Ken Frieden, made possible by the Vivian Marcus Memorial Fund. "Travelling to the Holy Land with Rabbi Nahman: A Literary and Musical Pilgrimage" was delivered as a lecture with a powerpoint as well as a live musical performance. Frieden played the clarinet, accompanied by Urbana-Champaign's own Frances Harris (violin) and Sam Gigher (accordion). The musical pieces illustrated the different stages of Rabbi Nahman's journey from Ukraine to the Holy Land and back. For example, in Istanbul, where Rabbi Nahman heard Arabic-inflected Hebrew and unfamiliar musical instruments, the travellers perceived a klezmer clarinet playing a *Terkish* melody. Passing through Bratslav, we hear "*Bratslav Freylekh*." Reflecting on the lecture-concert, Frances Harris "found it thrilling to play traditional music

in the context of this journey. For me that was very special. It gave it life beyond the notes, contextualized the music. I could picture the people and the time and the music."

This musical journey also demonstrates the Hasidic, Yiddish origins of Modern Hebrew writing. Nathan Sternharz's narrative of Rabbi Nahman's voyage is an

example of how nineteenth-century travel writing translated an implicit Yiddish original, contributing a vivid and accessible style to Hebrew writing.

Ken Frieden is the B. G. Rudolph Chair of Judaic Studies at Syracuse University. His recent book is entitled *Travels in Translation: Sea Tales at the Source of Jewish Fiction* (Syracuse University Press, 2016).



## SARA FELDMAN ON GREAT LAKES YIDDISH THEATER TROUPE



We are proud to introduce the *Great Lakes Yiddish Theater Troupe*, a new collaborative pedagogy project between the Yiddish programs at UIUC, the University of Toronto (Dr. Alexandra Hoffman), and the University of Michi-

gan (Dr. Anya Quilitzsch). Our Yiddish students co-translated and explored Leah Kapilovitsh-Hoffman's 1937 play, "*Kraft*" in the spring semester and then traveled to Toronto in May. In Toronto, students from the three campuses workshopped their various translations of the play and arrived at a version for publication. They also built their Yiddish language skills and cultural knowledge base with tours of the Workmen's Circle (in Yiddish) and Jewish historical sites of Kensington Market, a *shmues* with the local Yiddish *Vinkl*, a seminar on Yiddish literature and the Holocaust with Professor Anna Shternshis, a Yiddish theater workshop with Yiddish actor David Gale, a screening of the new Yiddish-English-Polish play "Wooden Wars" followed by a Q&A with writer and

director Jana Mazurkiewicz, and lots of traditional Ashkenazi food. The crowning event of this trip was a dramatic public reading of "*Kraft*" in Yiddish, starring students from all three campuses, at the Free Times Café. We are following up on this project with a roundtable at the ASEES conference in Chicago as well as a group of publications in the new online Yiddish journal *In Geveb*: the full student co-authored translation of the play with accompanying literary analysis, and an article for the journal's pedagogy section. There is nothing like this Yiddish program in the Midwest and we look forward to continuing it in the coming years with new texts and new faces!

See page 32 for bio of Sara Feldman.

## FRANCES HARRIS ON DEBORAH STRAUSS AND JEFF WARSCHAUER: KLEZMER MUSIC FROM OLD WORLD TO NEW



The Program in Jewish Culture and Society and the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center were pleased to host a lecture and musical demonstration by Yiddish music luminaries, Deborah Strauss and Cantor Jeff Warschauer on February 16 at the Music Building Auditorium. The duo began with a short performance, followed by an exploration of klezmer music from its historical roots in Eastern European Jewish culture to its

unique musical and cultural context in today's world. They closed with a lively Q & A session, fielding a range of questions from engaged audience members.

Jeff and Deborah's presentation was part of a weekend of activities in Champaign-Urbana co-sponsored by Sinai Temple, the Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation, the CUJF Endowment, and PJCS. Attracting a wide range of community members as well as students and scholars, events included the lecture and musical demonstration, a community concert and dance party, a klezmer music jam and workshop, and Shabbat services followed by "Shabbos zemiros" (singing) at Sinai Temple in Champaign.

For over 25 years, Deborah (violin, accordion, voice, dance) and Jeff (voice, guitar, mandolin) have been at the forefront of

the international klezmer and Yiddish music scene. More information can be found at <http://www.klezmerduo.com>.



Frances Harris was the long-time librarian at University Laboratory High School and is Professor Emerita of Library Administration. She has studied klezmer violin since 2002 and been lucky enough to count Deborah Strauss as one of her teachers.



# HOLOCAUST, GENOCIDE, MEMORY STUDIES

## BRETT ASHLEY KAPLAN REFLECTIONS ON HGMS

The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, Memory Studies (HGMS) was founded by Michael Rothberg in order to bring together scholars across the University of Illinois campus who are interested in comparative genocide issues and who work on questions of trauma and memory in the contexts of the Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia, Armenia, and other geographic and historical sites. Since Michael has re-located to UCLA I am honored to carry on leading this vibrant and important program.

HGMS is very committed to fostering graduate student education and to that end we have several projects ongoing. First, there is a Future of Trauma and Memory Studies reading group organized by HGMS students and housed in the seminar room in the Jewish Studies/HGMS office. This reading group fosters intellectual exchange between students and faculty from English, Comparative Literature, French, Art History, Library Sciences, German, and other programs and departments. Second, HGMS is affiliated with Mnemonics, an international summer school that holds an annual conference. We hosted the Mnemonics summer school in the summer of 2016 and it was thrilling to welcome graduate students and faculty from all over the world to discuss ideas at the cutting edge of memory studies. We will send an HGMS student, Dilara Çalıřkan, to the next Mnemonics conference in Frankfurt in September. Third, we are encouraging HGMS students to become engaged in the program by offering them chances to write for the newsletter and/or the blog

or perform. Our first student performance was spectacular. Ethan Madarieta produced SUBMersion Remember: A Performance of Memory. During this hour long multi-media performance Ethan baked bread (he brought in a portable oven) so there was an olfactory aspect to the experience as well; wordlessly he also submerged pieces of photographs into masa and hung them up to dry while a video played of sand dunes behind him. A beautiful article by HGMS student Megan Smith can be found on page 25.

Because of all of these graduate student activities many potential incoming graduate students choose Illinois so that they can be part of this vibrant intellectual community. HGMS students are also eligible to apply to our graduate fellowship through the Gendell Family and Shiner Family Fund. HGMS organizes many events to benefit the campus and off-campus communities. We have been able to produce a huge number of wonderful conferences, lectures, roundtables etc. on either a shoestring budget or with funds raised externally. The capstone event of this year was a conference entitled Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide. Co-organized with two HGMS graduate students, Helen Makhdoumian and Dilara Çalıřkan, this one day event was thrilling and the energy was amazing! (see page 22).

We also organized a series of international roundtable conversations entitled Radical Right and Remembering in Recent Political History that we plan to continue next year. These roundtables grew out

of a brainstorming session I organized this year and was suggested by HGMS student Naomi Taub. Part I focused on Turkey, Russia, Germany, Poland, and the U.S. It was really wonderful with a mix of faculty and graduate students speaking briefly about connections between past and present in terms of how the radical right is influencing parts of the world. Part II included faculty and graduate students discussing the radical right in The Netherlands, France, India, Korea, Austria, and Hungary. This year we plan to continue the series with discussions of the radical right in Japan, Columbia, Switzerland and other locations to be determined.

Other HGMS events this year included a fascinating screening of the soon to be released film *Finding Oscar*. This film, directed by U of I alumnus Ryan Suffern (who came to campus from L.A. to do a Q & A after the screening), tells the story of a massacre in a small Guatemalan village and the after-effects as archaeologists, human rights advocates, legal experts, historians, and survivors try to piece together what happened and how to bring justice to bear on the horror. The title alludes to a child survivor who was found in Massachusetts and reunited with his biological father through a DNA test. The screening room was almost full and we were able to reach out to students, community members, and colleagues associated with Latin American Studies. We are grateful to English, Comparative Literature and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and to Tony Pomonis for organizing the event in L.A. at which we met Ryan!

## HGMS

Next year I am launching an HGMS faculty seminar. Tim Wedig from global studies has agreed to offer a workshop on Rwanda, Anke Pinkert from German will discuss her recent work in memory studies, Peter Fritzsche from history will discuss his recent chapter “Where was God?” A distinguished guest to campus, Ariella Azoulay will also present a workshop on photography and memory.

The biggest challenge faced by HGMS is a lack of funding. We are formally housed within the Program in Jewish Culture & Society so we have both space and staff support through that arrangement. On a case-by-case basis Jewish Studies generously grants funds. But each time we have an event, invite a speaker, or hold a conference, we need to fundraise independently per event. For the wonder-

ful Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide conference, for example, we raised money through various campus and off campus organizations including the National Association for Armenian Research. We are working towards setting up an “April 24 Fund” in order to have starter funds available for an event each year in commemoration of the Armenian genocide.

# HELEN MAKHDOUMIAN AND DILARA ÇALIŞKAN REFLECTIONS ON SPACES OF REMEMBERING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE CONFERENCE AND FILM SCREENING

On April 28th, 2017, The Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies (HGMS) and The Future of Trauma and Memory Studies (FTMS) reading group hosted *Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide*. The atmosphere at the conference was electric, the room was full to bursting, and everyone agreed it was a spectacular event!

Conference speakers included Myrna Douzjian (UC Berkeley), Talar Chahinian

(California State University, Long Beach), Nancy Kricorian (New York City-based writer and organizer), and Scout Tufankjian (New York City-based photographer). Brett Kaplan also invited us, Helen Makhdoumian and Dilara Çalışkan, to present. The event closed with a screening of *Armenoscope: constructing belonging* and a conversation with the documentary essay’s director, Silvina Der-Meguerditchian (Berlin-based visual artist and artistic director for *Houshamadyan*).

In this vein, we had both an all-women organizing committee and an all-women lineup of speakers making thought-provoking, critical and artistic contributions to Armenian studies and the larger fields of trauma, memory, and diaspora studies. Faculty and graduate students across campus introduced each speaker.

Brett suggested doing an event on the topic of the Armenian Genocide to Helen after learning about a campus conference funding application. Helen proposed inviting inspiring people with diverse academic and creative talents and backgrounds. Because of her exposure to the interdisciplinary and multinational community of promising and more advanced scholars that HGMS has fostered, Helen believes that Armenian literature and art often produce nuanced theories that can be harnessed alongside other methodological frameworks for the study of transnational Armenian experiences. Dilara joined the organizing committee



Dilara Çalışkan and Helen Makhdoumian

First Republic Day, Freedom Square, Yerevan, The Republic of Armenia, Scout Tufankjian



and provided insightful perspectives that continued to shape the committee's goals for the event.

Alongside speakers and attendees, we actualized our vision for the event: to foster conversations on remembrance practices of the Armenian Genocide across time, space, and place, how memories of this genocide travel across media and form (film, literature, art, and photography), and how Armenians' experiences of victimization and survival are referenced in varied locations and contexts to raise awareness of other histories of traumatic collective violence.

The diverse geographies, backgrounds, and disciplines of both panelists and attendees engendered dynamic and transformative discussions throughout the day. By the afternoon, the room filled to full capacity. The exciting conference program drew an audience of students, faculty, and community members from UIUC and even other Illinois institu-

tions. Attendees actively participated in post-panel discussions, which further facilitated an interdisciplinary atmosphere and opened spaces to think more critically about memory work and its itinerary across borders and generations. Ultimately, *Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide* demonstrated that collective memory remains a vital source of inspiration for ongoing struggles for justice.

To continue the conversations that transformed all of us during the event,

HGMS has invited Khatchig Mouradian to give a lecture in January. Furthermore, the comments about the strength of this conference's structure and the energy for continuing to produce innovative scholarship on the memory and representation of the Armenian Genocide that it generated inspires us to continue to carry HGMS forward as an internationally-recognized venue for research, teaching, and public engagement with diverse histories and memories of collective trauma. To that end, HGMS would like to begin



Scout Tufankjian

## HGMS



the process of establishing The April 24th Fund, which will enable the Initiative to host more events to commemorate and study the Armenian Genocide.

Such opportunities will help us further actualize what HGMS, FTMS, and The Program in Jewish Culture and Society have previously set into motion for us and countless others. That is, an awareness of how a thick understanding of the past can inform how we witness, engage, and respond to contemporaneous acts of mass violence, displacement, and migration and how we address related questions about history-writing processes, remembering, forgetting, and denial, and the securing of social justice for different peoples who resist erasure.

Many individuals and organizations made this conference possible and we are so grateful to all for their generous support; we thoroughly enjoyed bringing together the “Dream Team.” Enormous thanks to:

Beckman Institute; Center for Advanced Study; Center for South Asian & Middle Eastern Studies; College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Department of English; Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures; Department of History; European Union Center; Graduate College; National Association for Armenian Studies and Research; Program in Comparative and World Literatures; Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center; School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics.

For more event photos, visit <http://traumaandmemory.weebly.com/photos.html>

Helen Makhdomian received a BA in English with an Art minor from Westminster College and an MA in English from UIUC, where she is also pursuing her PhD through English and HGMS. She works comparatively on Armenian American, Arab American, and American Indian literatures and focuses on representations of collective violence and trauma, memory, and migration.

Dilara Çalışkan is a PhD student in the Anthropology Department and HGMS. She is also a graduate student fellow of the Center for the Study of Social Difference at Columbia University and working on the links between queer kinship and non-normative forms of “intergenerational” transmission of memory. From 2014 to 2016 she worked at Sabancı University’s Gender and Women’s Studies Forum as the coordinator of Curious Steps: Gender and Memory Walks of Istanbul project. In 2014, she graduated from Sabancı University’s Cultural Studies Master Program with a thesis titled “Queer Mothers and Daughters: The Role of Queer Kinship in the Everyday Lives of Trans Sex Worker Women in Istanbul.” Since 2010, she has been involved with Istanbul LGBTI Solidarity Association, which particularly focuses on transgender rights and opposes the criminalization of sex work, and supports its recognition as work.



## MEAGAN SMITH ON DISORIENTING MEMORY / REORIENTING THE PRESENT A RESPONSE TO ETHAN MADARIETA'S *SUBMERGE REMEMBER*

The smell of baking bread is an incredible, visceral memory trigger. It always takes me back to a particular time and place in my childhood, and then initiates an involuntary flood of other associations and memories. I'm at my best friend's house; it must be sometime in the mid-nineties, when I was in middle school. It was around the time that those automatic bread-makers became popular and Patti, my best friend's mom, had one. She'd make this slightly crusty white bread and the smell would fill the kitchen and creep throughout the house. Our parents were close and Patti would have my whole family over for these wonderful dinners. My mom was just a shockingly terrible cook, so dinners at Patti's house

were always a treat for us. The smell of baking bread always reminds me of Patti, who died about a year-and-a-half ago, just before her sixtieth birthday. It reminds me of being in middle school, of the safety and comfort of my best friend's house as opposed to the chaos and pins-and-needles feeling of my own house. For some reason, it also reminds me of the first time I ate fresh green beans.

The range of these personal details, the intense emotions and the inconsequential memory of the green beans, were all invoked and laid bare for my own private act of contemplation the night of December 9th during Ethan Madarieta's performance *SUBmersion Remember*:

*a performance of memory.* Submersion is a fitting description of the experience. Ethan was the sole performer and didn't speak a word or even make eye contact with the audience, but we were each engaged in the sensorial textures he managed to create and the stream of individual memories and emotions he raised in a span of roughly forty-five minutes. The lights were off, a mild psychedelic droning music played in the background, a video installation with shots of soft cumulus clouds and footage of sandy high-desert from a variety of angles played on a screen behind an apparatus consisting of a clothesline suspended between two cinderblocks and pine two-by-fours, and, to complete the sensorial





submersion, the scent of baking bread filled the room from a convection oven in the corner. Ethan's role consisted mainly of mixing and kneading the ingredients for a second loaf of bread while intermittently pausing to hang objects covered in batter from the clothesline. This was bookended with several minutes of him sitting on the cinderblocks, bent forward with his elbows on his knees in a sort of self-contained, introspective pose. The performance struck a balance between invoking this intensely personal, self-contained introspection—in which the actions, objects, and spaces presented to the audience remained unexplained—and the ambiguity of impersonal observation. In some sense the precise content

and meaning of the more or less familiar images was less important than their common ability to invoke an individual response. This tension between the familiar and the strange, the intensely personal and the common or generalizable, hints at the theoretical apparatus of Ethan's performance: the Bergsonian notion of "pure memory." For Bergson, pure memory relies on the *defamiliarization* of the familiar. It can disrupt the automatic chain of involuntary perception and unconscious reaction. Perception, for Bergson, is as automatic as reflex and is full of memories that speed up the time it takes to involuntarily process external stimulus. The ease with which a stored memory is recalled and mapped

onto a current moment overcomes the more complicated process of integrating perception and memory in response to a more or less familiar external object. In this process, the spontaneous potential of the individual body is lost, choice and even consciousness of one's movement through the world become all but obsolete.

To reintegrate the body into the external world of things acting upon it, we must disrupt mindlessness of actions produced by automatic, unconscious perception. The surreal act of hanging batter-soaked objects on a clothesline with no explanation accomplishes this act of disruption. Each of the memory-ob-

jects—photographs, leaves, little trinkets—represents some significant moment in Ethan’s life, but that significance is lost to the audience who likely cannot identify the object let alone access the memories associated with it. While each object might be familiar in a general sense, they are emptied of their specific content, they lack the context needed for interpretation, and they become strange and unfamiliar when obscured by the batter and the layers of indecipherable meaning heaped on them through their association with someone else’s inaccessible memories.

The technique of making an object or event unfamiliar is intended to disorient rather than orient us to our perceived universe. It gives objects and even memories back their unique properties so that we can perceive them without all the baggage of always already “knowing” what they mean and how to respond to them. For an object or event to break the ceaseless automatization of perception and reaction, though, the process of perception must be artificially prolonged. What Bergson calls “pure memory” is the process by which these automatic memory responses are disrupted, broken down, and then strung back together. This requires sustained intellectual engagement and full submersion in the sensorial experience of the disruptive event.

What Ethan’s performance enacts is the *duration* of pure memory; he emphasizes the process, the time and full awareness it demands. He provides the audience with layers of sensory stimuli full of surreal but familiar memory triggers: the stream of personal associations invoked by scent of the bread, the prolonged submersion in the disorienting space of someone else’s memories, the strangeness of the batter-soaked objects hanging from the clothesline, and especially the otherworldliness of the of clouds and open desert occupied only by an impersonal naked body leaving impermanent marks in the sand. For me, this last image is associated particularly with the imaginative futures and “elsewhere” of science fiction—a realm of unfamiliarity and untapped potential. The juxtaposition of all the memories and emotions invoked by the multiple layers of Ethan’s performance is full of the same surreal otherworldliness and untapped potential. Placing my childhood memories of my best friend’s house next to the perplexing image of batter dripping from unidentified objects on a clothesline in front of a video montage of a naked man walking in reverse through some alien landscape is disorienting, to say the least. Throw in the random memory of green beans and we’ve certainly entered the realm of the surreal. That’s the point, though. Pure

memory requires full, sometimes uncomfortable submersion, but it provides us with fresh perceptions and enough strange material to build otherwise impossible connections and to imagine brave new futures.



Meagan Smith is a PhD candidate in Comparative and World Literature. Her dissertation explores literary representations of border walls in 20th and 21st century dystopian fiction from the US, the USSR and Mexico.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016/17

Dara Goldman and David Hadar



With Vicky Mahaffey, Mary Anna Pomonis, Tony Pomonis, and Evan Tammen at the Orange and Blue Alumni Get Together in Los Angeles



Maud Mandel with Faculty and Students



Associate Director Dana Rabin recruits Jewish Studies minors and majors



Members of the Advisory Council meeting at Lorelei Rosenthal's Home



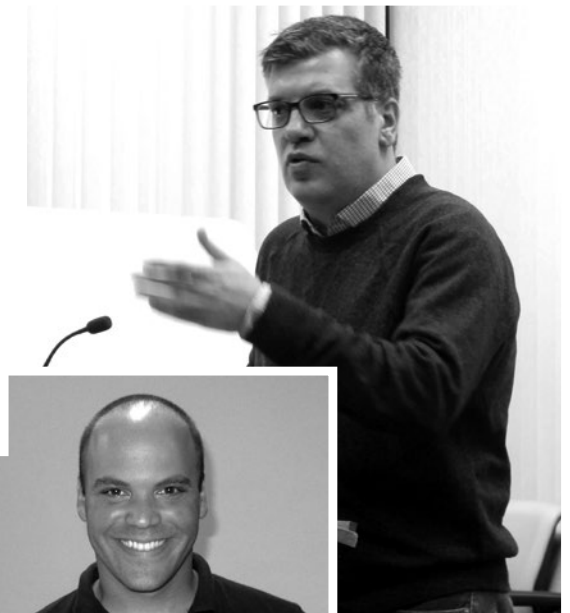


Jewish Studies Welcome Reception



Frances Harris, Eugene Avrutin, and Eugene Yelchin

Sayed Kashua discussing his show, The Writer



Dana Rabin and Erez Cohen at the Jewish Studies Welcome Reception



Einhorn Lecturer Maud Mandel with Ann Einhorn

## LAST YEAR'S EVENTS

### Sunday August 28

Jewish Studies Welcome Party

### Monday, September 12

*Traveling to the Holy Land with Rabbi Nahman: A Literary and Musical Pilgrimage*

A lecture/concert by Ken Frieden, B.G. Rudolph Chair of Judaic Studies, Syracuse University; Vivian Marcus Memorial Fund (see article on page 19)

### Monday, September 19

*Jewish Death Thinking: Amy Levy and Anzia Yezierska*

Susan Bernstein, English, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Jewish Studies workshop (see article on page 14)

### Monday, September 26

*Goodbye Roth: Publishing Jews at Knopf American Jewish Literature in the 21st Century*

Josh Lambert, Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; sponsored by Trowbridge Initiative in American Cultures

### Tuesday, October 4

*The People vs. Fritz Bauer*

Movie screening at The Art Theatre, organized by Austin McCann  
Prof Kaplan, Prof Fritzsche, and Prof Ross  
Q & A after the film

### Monday, October 10

Book release: *Pious Irreverence: Confronting God in Rabbinic Judaism*

Dov Weiss, Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies, Religious Studies, UIUC, with an introduction from Professor Bruce Rosenstock

### Wednesday, October 19

Maxime Decout

*Literature and Jewishness in France*; organized by Marcus Keller, Department of French, with support from PJCS; see the HGMS blog for an article by Priscilla Charrat Nelson about Maxime's wonderful visit: <http://hgmsblog.weebly.com/blog/maxime-decout-guides-a-visit-to-modianos-parisian-memoryscape>

### Friday, October 21

Eugene Yelchin, children's author and illustrator; organized by Linda Tammen of the College of Education's Youth Literature Festival and co-supported by REEEC

### Tuesday October 25

*Retrofitting Totalitarianism in Putin's Russia*

Masha Gessen, Author, activist and journalist for The New Yorker, The New York Times, Granta, Slate, and Vanity Fair; Krouse Family visiting Scholars in Judaism and Western Culture/CAS Miller Comm; REEEC. Jewish Studies Workshop discussion of Gessen's *Where the Jews Aren't* (see article on page 10)

### Friday November 4

*Radical Right and Remembering in Recent Political History: Germany, Poland, Russia, Turkey, and the U.S.* Featuring Peter Fritzsche, Alex van Doren, John Randolph, Helen Makhdounian, Dilara Çalışkan, and Naomi Taub; HGMS

### Friday, December 9

*SUBMersion Remember: A Performance of Memory* by Ethan Madarieta; HGMS (see article on page 25)

### Tuesday, January 17

*Philip Roth's Israeli Readers: Debating Jewish Continuity*

David Hadar, Freie Universität Berlin; Jewish Studies Workshop

### Monday, January 23

Sayed Kashua, *The Writer*; screening and discussion

### Monday, February 6

*Bruno Schulz, E.M. Liliem and the Archaeology of Polish Jewish Modernism*

Karen Underhill, Slavic, UIC; Jewish Studies/HGMS Workshop

### Friday March 10

Showing of *13th* Organized by Future of Trauma and Memory Studies Students Naomi Taub and Helen Makhdounian; HGMS

### Monday, February 13

*In the Bloodlands: Exploring the Killing Fields of Eastern Europe*

Adam Jones, Political Science, University of British Columbia Okanagan; Jewish Studies /HGMS Workshop

### Thursday, February 16

*Strauss/Warschauer Duo*

A Klezmer music event; co-Sponsored with REEEC (see article on page 20)

### Monday, February 20

Lecture: *The Double Helix of Jewish History: Genetics & the Search for the Origin of the Jews*; Jewish Studies Workshop: *A Thrice-Told Tel: The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis*

Steven Weitzman, Abraham M. Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Literatures, Ella Darivoff Director of the Katz Center of Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania; Samuel and Sheila Goldberg Lectureship Fund (see article on page 16)

### Sunday – Tuesday, March 5-7

*“A Film of Her Own: Women in Israeli Cinema”* Conference organized by Rachel Harris (see article on page 12)

### Monday – Tuesday, March 27-28

*Is ‘Fraternity’ Possible: Muslim-Jewish Relations in Contemporary France-History & Reflections*

Maud Mandel, Professor of History and Judaic Studies, Brown University,

Oscar and Rose Einhorn Fund; Jewish Studies workshop: *Street Riots & Jewish Politics: Anti-Jewish Violence in Tunisia Before Decolonization*; IPRH Inside Scoop lunch with undergraduates

### Monday, April 3

*Radical Right and Remembering Part II: France, India, Hungary, The Netherlands, Korea, and Austria*; featuring Jean-Philippe Mathy, Rini Bhattacharya, Zsuzsa Gille, Cark Niekerk, JiHyea Hwang, and Anna Souchuk; HGMS

### Monday, April 17

*Between Orient & Occident: Moroccan Jews & the Spanish Colonial Project*  
Eric Calderwood; Jewish Studies Workshop

### Monday, April 24

*Screening of Vita Activa –The Spirit of Hannah Arendt*  
Q&A w/ Professor Bruce Rosenstock; HGMS

### Friday, April 28

*Spaces of Remembering the Armenian Genocide*  
(see article page 22); HGMS

### Thursday, May 4

*Finding Oscar*  
Film screening and Q & A with alumnus, writer/director Ryan Suffern; co-sponsored with English, Comparative Literature, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies; HGMS

### Friday May 12

Jewish Studies Celebration of Founders Michael Shapiro and Gary Porton. Awards Ceremony, and Spring Reception

### Film Series

*Yiddish and Hebrew film series organized by Sara Feldman*

September 21 *The Light Ahead*

October 5 *Green Fields*

October 19 *The Cantor’s Son*

November 9 *Sallah Shabati followed by a discussion with Sayed Kashua*

February 15 *Motel the Operator*

March 15 *Shtisel*

April 19 *Mamele*

*Dialogue: A Polish-Jewish Film Series organized by Lizy Mostowski (Spring 2017)*

January 26 *Ida*

February 9 *The Innocents*

February 23 *The Hourglass Sanitorium*

March 9 *Little Rose*

April 20 *Austeria*

## THE PROGRAM IN JEWISH CULTURE & SOCIETY: FACULTY



**Eugene M. Avrutin** Associate Professor of History and Tobor Family Scholar in the Program in Jewish Culture and Society, presented at the first international conference in Jewish Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, as well as participated at a workshop at the University of Michigan. He co-edited and co-wrote the introduction for the volume, *Ritual Murder in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Beyond: New Histories of an Old Accusation*, published by Indiana University Press. He has begun work on a new book, *Race in Modern Russia: Critical Perspectives*, that explores the problem of racialization from the nineteenth century to Putin.



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



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



**Virginia Dominquez** is the Edward William and Jane Marr Gutsell Professor of Anthropology. She is the co-Founder and consulting director of the International Forum for U.S. Studies and co-editor of its book series, *Global Studies of the United States*. A political and legal anthropologist, she is past-president of the American Anthropological Association, former editor of *American Ethnologist*, and past-president of the AAA's Society for Cultural Anthropology. In 2013 she helped the World Council of Anthropological Associations establish the Brazil-based Antropologos sem fronteiras (Anthropologists without Borders). Her most recent books are the coedited *America Observed: Toward an International Anthropology of the United States* (Berghahn Books, 2017) and *Global Perspectives on the U.S.* (University of Illinois Press, 2017).



**Sara Feldman** is the Hebrew and Yiddish Lecturer in the Program in Jewish Culture & Society. She is writing a book that frames modern Hebrew and Yiddish literary history as a product of the Russian imperial context. Her other research projects include work on representations of queer and Orthodox Jews in television and film.



**Dara E. Goldman** is Associate Professor of Spanish, specializing in Latin American and Caribbean Literatures and Cultures, gender and sexuality studies, and critical theory. Her scholarship includes work on Jewish culture in Cuba, Jewish themes in Cuban and Cuban-American literature, and the role of Jewish time and space in the Amazon series *Transparent*. She has also lectured on Jewish populations in Latin America and the Caribbean. During her 2017-18 sabbatical, she will be completing her book manuscript, "Beyond the Façade: Depth and Disorder in Cuban Cultural Expression (2004-2016)."





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



**Harriet Murav** Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature and editor of *Slavic Review*. Her co-translation from the Yiddish, with Sasha Senderovich, of *Judgment*, by David Bergelson, is forthcoming from Northwestern University Press in the fall of 2017. Harriet submitted a book manuscript, *A Strange New World: Untimeliness, Futurity, and David Bergelson* to Indiana University Press. An Arnold O. Beckman Award from our campus Research Board is funding the first phase of her new project, *Archive of Violence: Literature, History, and the Pogroms of the Russian Revolutions*. Together with Gene Avrutin, Dana Rabin, and other colleagues, she has received funding from IPRH for a research cluster on Russian and East European Jewish culture.



**Dana Rabin** In fall 2017 Dana Rabin's book *Britain and its Internal Outsiders, 1750-1800: Under Rule of Law* will be published by Manchester University Press in its Imperial Studies series. In addition to her writing, she taught JS 199: Introduction to Jewish Studies this past spring. What a pleasure to hear from so many of our colleagues in Jewish Studies as they presented their work to the students and introduced them to the interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies that make up the field. Dana won the Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching awarded by the College of LAS in April 2017. She will continue as Associate Director of the Program in 2017-2018.



**Bruce Rosenstock** is Professor of Religion and has just published *Transfinite Life: Oskar Goldberg and the Vitalist Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). He presented "Franz Rosenzweig and Markus Gabriel's New Realism: Toward a Philosophy of Revelation," at "Into Life: Rosenzweig on Knowledge, Aesthetics, and Politics," an international conference organized by the Martin Buber Society of Fellows and the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center at the Hebrew University, together with the Collaborative Research Center Episteme in Motion at the Department of Philosophy and Humanities of the Freie Universität Berlin, January 7-9, 2017.



**Dov Weiss** is an Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Specializing in the history of Jewish biblical interpretation and rabbinic theology, Dov's most recent articles include "Sins of the Parents in Rabbinic and Early Christian Literature" (*Journal of Religion*), "Divine Concessions in the Tanhuma Mi-drashim" (*Harvard Theological Review*), and "The Sin of Protesting God in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature" (*AJS Review*). His first book, *Pious Irreverence: Confronting God in Rabbinic Judaism*, was recently published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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\*We are deeply grateful to all of you for your much-needed support!! On the advice of the Advisory Council we have re-done the list to include only donations since June, 2016. We have made every effort to list everyone but please forgive us if you have given and your name does not appear here. If that is the case, my deep apologies! Please email me at bakaplan@illinois.edu and I will correct the electronic version ASAP. Thanks for your understanding.





You can make a gift to the program online, by phone or using the accompanying form. Our new Advancement Officer is Tony Pomonis (English '02). Tony expanded the local chain of Merry-Ann's Diners from one location to four and he offers his own experience as proof that a humanities degree equips you with the skills needed for career success. You can reach out to him as well (217-300-3470 or apomonis@illinois.edu). Tony will be traveling the country regularly and may be in your neighborhood soon! Your gift will support the program's continued excellence in education.

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