

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

2017-2018 / 5778

Northwestern



THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

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Northwestern

Crown Family Center for
Jewish and Israel Studies

ON THE COVER

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FROM THE DIRECTORS



Dear Friends, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies provides an umbrella framework for Jewish studies and Israel studies at Northwestern University. Our mission is to foster excellence in teaching and research in these fields.

This year's newsletter includes an expanded focus on the research conducted by our faculty and graduate students. Whether they are scholars of religion, history, literature, or another field, our faculty and graduate students pursue research at the highest level. They ask and seek to answer pressing questions about the Jewish experience around the world and across time. On page 10, you can read about the Center's sponsorship of a series of events highlighting new research in Sephardic Studies and on page 4, you can read about the Harris Day of Jewish Study, which brought our faculty's research to a public audience.

The Crown Family Center plays an active role in graduate education. Each year the Center awards the Crown Graduate Fellowship to a student completing his or her dissertation. In addition, the Center plays a critical role in organizing the Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster, which provides PhD students in various departments with additional training in Jewish Studies. This year's newsletter features research updates from many of the JS Cluster's students.

In short, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies ensures that the work of Jewish studies and Israel studies research at Northwestern is done at the highest level and in conversation with the best scholars on campus and around the world.

Our commitment to excellence in research is closely tied to our commitment to excellence in the undergraduate classroom. The Jewish Studies curriculum includes more than 30 courses that are offered each year by faculty members affiliated with the Crown Family Center. Hundreds of students enroll in these courses. We offer both a major and a minor in Jewish Studies.

The Center also organizes four large annual public events: the Renée and Lester Crown Speaker Series, the Allan and Norma Harris Day of Jewish Study, the Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization, and the Manfred H. Vogel Memorial Lecture in Judaic Studies. Each event allows a broad community audience to engage with Jewish Studies scholarship. See pages 8-9 for more details on all of our events.

Finally, at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies bids farewell to two faculty members. Professor Mira Balberg left Evanston for a new position as Professor and Endowed Chair in Ancient Jewish Civilization in the Department of History at the University of California, San Diego. Professor Marcia Gealy has retired after more than 35 years of teaching in the Cook Family Writing Program and the Programs in American Studies, Comparative Literary Studies, and Jewish Studies. We wish them both well in their future endeavors; they will be missed.

Martin Eichenbaum
Director

Claire E. Sufrin
Assistant Director, Jewish Studies

FACULTY

Meet our Faculty

MIRA BALBERG, associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies

DANNY M. COHEN, assistant professor of instruction in the School of Education and Social Policy

SARAH CUSHMAN, director of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University, lecturer in the Department of History

EFRAT DASKAL, postdoctoral fellow in Israel studies

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

BENJAMIN FROMMER, associate professor in the Department of History

MARCIA GEALY, associate professor of instruction in the Cook Family Writing Program

EDNA GRAD, distinguished senior lecturer emerita in Hebrew Language

PETER HAYES, Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies Emeritus in the Departments of History and German

LUCILLE KERR, professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

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

PHYLLIS LASSNER, professor of instruction emerita in the Cook Family Writing Program, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, and Jewish Studies Program



Claire Sufrin

MARCUS MOSELEY, associate professor in the Department of German

YOHANAN PETROVSKY-SHTERN, Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies and professor in the Department of History

ELIE REKHESS, Crown Visiting Professor in Israel Studies, associate director for Israel studies, and visiting professor in the Department of History

JOSEPH RINGEL, postdoctoral fellow in Israel studies

KENNETH SEESKIN, Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization and professor in the Departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies

DAVID SHYOVITZ, associate professor in the Department of History

CLAIRE SUFRIN, associate professor of instruction in the Jewish Studies Program and assistant director of Jewish studies

HANNA TZUKER SELTZER, assistant professor of instruction in the Jewish Studies and the Middle East and North African Studies Programs

BARRY SCOTT WIMPFHEIMER, associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies and the Pritzker School of Law

Faculty News

MIRA BALBERG authored a new book titled *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature* (University of California Press, 2017). She also published articles in several journals, including *Currents in Biblical Research*, *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, and the Israeli journal *Theory and Criticism*, and gave public talks at the University of Michigan and the University of Notre Dame. At the end of 2017-2018, she won the Department of Religious Studies' teaching award. As of Fall 2018, Balberg will be professor of history and Endowed Chair in Ancient Jewish Civilization at the University of California, San Diego.

DANNY M. COHEN was named creative director of Unsilence, the national human rights education nonprofit he founded. Throughout the year, he served as author-in-residence at Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School in Chicago, where he worked with eighth-grade students studying Holocaust history through his novel *Train*. Starting in Fall 2018, Cohen will be overseeing "Unsilence Lab" for Northwestern students interested in hands-on, for-credit experience with the design and research of human rights, genocide, and Holocaust education.

SARAH CUSHMAN taught "Gender, Race, and the Holocaust" in Fall 2017. Cushman continues to work on the book adaptation of her dissertation about the women's camp in Auschwitz. She conducted a research trip with an NU undergrad to Poland this past spring.

PETER FENVES published a Spanish-language monograph, *Walter Benjamin entre los filósofos* (Buenos Aires-Santiago: Palinodia, 2017), that will appear in an expanded English version in 2020; a volume of essays on the work of Samuel Weber that he co-edited and introduced;

continued

Welcome to new Hebrew instructor Hanna Tzucker Seltzer



SELTZER, assistant professor of instruction in Jewish Studies and the Middle East and North African Studies Program, spent her first year at Northwestern developing new curricula for Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Hebrew students. In these new curricula, the emphasis is on communicative-interactive Hebrew, with cultural references to Israel, including stories, poems, songs, and movies. In particular,

she created an interdisciplinary course for advanced Hebrew students that revolves around a different theme each quarter. The thematic anchor allows for materials from a variety of genres and responds to student interests. Seltzer studied Film and Television at the Hadassah College in Jerusalem and Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where she completed her BA summa cum laude. Seltzer received her PhD in Modern Hebrew Literature and Israeli Film from the University of California, Berkeley, in May 2017.

an essay on Walter Benjamin and Heinrich Rickert published simultaneously in English and Italian; an essay for the Italian journal *Paradigmi* on Benjamin and Hermann Cohen; and an essay on the image of China, as mediated by translations of the *Daodejing* among Jewish-German writers and thinkers in the early 20th century including Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Franz Kafka. The latter essay appeared in Chinese in 2017 and will soon appear in an English-language volume published by Springer Verlag. A separate inquiry into Benjamin's relation to Chinese texts appeared in the journal *Positions*. Fennes recently gave a weeklong mini-seminar at the Humanities Institute of Diego Portales University-Santiago in conjunction with his participation in the Mellon Foundation Grant for Critical Theory and the Global South. He also delivered a keynote address

at the biannual Benjamin conference in Oxford and participated in a colloquium in Rijeka, Croatia, around the theme of "The Critique of Violence Today."

BENJAMIN FROMMER made substantial progress on his manuscript, "The Ghetto without Walls: The Identification, Isolation, and Elimination of Bohemian and Moravian Jewry, 1938-1945." Together with his co-editor, Adrienne Edgar (University of California, Santa Barbara), Frommer also submitted a full draft of a collected volume on the phenomenon of intermarriage under — and after — fascist and communist rule. In winter quarter 2018, he taught a survey course on the history of the Holocaust before leading a spring seminar on trials of Holocaust perpetrators and deniers.

LUCILLE KERR continued to focus her teaching, research, and mentoring of students on the Latin American context with emphasis on works of fiction, testimonial texts, and films, which include materials by Jewish-Latin Americans. Graduate teaching encompassed a practicum on scholarly writing and publication. Undergraduate courses dealt with core areas of the field that brought worldwide recognition to the Latin American tradition: the literary production during the "Boom" of Latin American literature in the 1960s to early 1970s and testimonial narratives and films from the mid-twentieth century to the present day. Her scholarly projects during the year included ongoing work as founder and director of the web-based Latin American Literature & Film Archive as well as research for a critical analysis of Jacobo Timerman's 1980 testimonial work *Preso sin nombre, celda sin número* (Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number), which directed international attention to the plight of Jewish-Argentine citizens imprisoned and tortured during the 1976-83 military dictatorship.

JACOB LASSNER recently completed a book titled *Near Eastern Politics and Historical Memory: Intersections between the Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*. The book deals with the manner in which residual memories of the past, be they real, massaged, or woven from new cloth, affect contemporaneous political thought and behavior.

PHYLLIS LASSNER has continued to present and publish her research on Holocaust representation and World War II and Cold War women writers. She presented her work on Polish Holocaust films at the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem and on the Holocaust escape memoir by Trudi Kanter, *Some Girls, Some Hats, and Hitler*, at the Modernist Studies Association in Amsterdam. Her essay "Double Trouble: Helen MacInnes's and Agatha Christie's Speculative Spy Thrillers" was published in *The History of British Women's Writing*,

1945-1975. She also co-edited the 2017 special issue of *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* on the topic of “Espionage as Cultural Artifact.”

MARCUS MOSELEY presented a paper at the University of Wisconsin titled “How to Make Money: Sholem Aleichem’s *Di freylakhe kompaniye*.” Moseley is currently writing an essay on the relationship between H. N. Bialik’s famous poetic responses to the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, notably “In the City of Slaughter,” and Abraham Meeropol’s song “Strange Fruit.” The latter, performed by Billie Holiday, is regarded as one of the most significant statements on race in the 20th century. He continues to work on a larger project — “Dead Can Walk: Fear and Loathing in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature” — that engages the ubiquitous presence of ghosts, zombies, and *dybbuks* in these literatures.

YOHANAN PETROVSKY-SHTERN obtained a generous grant to sponsor a group of researchers in Lviv responsible for creating catalogues of the pre-WWII Judaica collections at seven museum depositories. He also co-curated and co-organized an exhibition at the National Museum of Ethnography in Lviv with about 500 artifacts on display, which introduced and celebrated the rich legacy of the Galician Jews. He gave keynote presentations at international conferences in Lviv, Berlin, and Paris; and book presentations at Northwestern University, the Chicago-based Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, the University of Vienna, and the University of Munich. He taught the history and culture of Jews in Ukraine and Ukrainian-Jewish relations through the centuries at the Free Ukrainian University in Munich, Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, and National University “Ostroh Academy.” He also gave a number of book presentations in Ukraine following the publication of his monograph *The Anti-Imperial Choice* in Ukrainian translation by KRYTYKA Publishers in conjunction with the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.

ELIE REKHESS participated in the Water Technology and Environmental Control Exhibition and Conference (Watec) in Israel. In October, he was the featured commentator following a screening of *Ben Gurion, An Epilogue* at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership in Chicago. Rekhess co-chaired the third annual Symposium on Water in Israel and the Middle East at Northwestern (see page 8 for details). At the “Israel at 70: Continuities, Changes, Challenges” conference co-hosted by the Israel Institute, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Center for Jewish History in New York City, Rekhess was a panelist in the discussion of “New Voices and New Politics in Israel.” He also gave a lecture on Arabs in Israel at the Summer Institute for Israel Studies held at Brandeis’ Schusterman Center for Israel Studies and lectured on the Sephardi-Ashkenazi communal divide in Israel at the Goldstein Goren Center for Israel Studies at the University of Bucharest.

KEN SEESKIN was on leave during the 2017-18 academic year. In that time, he completed a long essay on the Jewish conception of freedom; two intermediate-length essays entitled “Can There be a Positive Theology?” and “What the Guide of the Perplexed is Really About”; and a short essay on the Second Commandment. Most of his efforts, however, went into a book-length study of the biblical prophets.

DAVID SHYOVITZ spent the year at work on his second book, tentatively titled, “O Beastly Jew!” *Jews, Animals, and Jewish Animals in the Middle Ages*. The project explores the ways medieval Jews and Christians conceptualized the boundaries between humans and (non-human) animals. In September 2017, Shyovitz was a visiting fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, while he also delivered lectures at the Newberry Library, the University of Notre Dame, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In the summer of 2018, he returned to the Katz Center as a faculty member at their advanced summer

school for graduate students in Jewish Studies, which was devoted this year to “The Supernatural in Jewish History and Culture.” In addition to his regular course rotation, Shyovitz also taught a quarter-long course on “Christians and Jews” through the Alumnae of Northwestern University’s continuing education program.

CLAIRE SUFRIN taught a popular new seminar for first-year students entitled “A Rabbi and a Priest Walk into a Bar... To Talk about God.” In the course, students studied models of interfaith dialogue and had a chance to experiment with different ways of talking together about their deepest commitments. Sufrin presented her research on religion and literature at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference and the “Fractured Paradigms: Rethinking the Study of American Jews” Biennial Scholars’ Conference on American Jewish History. She also participated in the annual meeting of the Society for Jewish Ethics and the Philosophy Conference at the Shalom Hartman Institute. Her article “Buber, the Bible, and Hebrew Humanism: Finding a Usable Past” appeared in *Modern Judaism* 38:1. Her current research — “Storytelling and Meaning-Making: Jewish Literature and Jewish Thought in America” — received a grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research, which allowed Sufrin to hire and mentor an undergraduate research assistant in support of this project over summer 2018.

BARRY WIMPFHEIMER debuted a course entitled: “Jews and the Transgender Moment” that examined the overlap between Jewish and transgender identities and their representation in contemporary popular culture in the fall quarter. His book *The Talmud: A Biography* appeared in Princeton University Press’ “Lives of Great Religious Books” series. Wimpfheimer also published “A Biography or a Hagiography,” a review of Aaron Hughes’ *Jacob Neusner: An American Jewish Iconoclast* in *Religious Studies Review*.

RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

This year's Allan and Norma Harris Day of Jewish Study on Sunday, March 18, 2018, featured three Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies faculty members discussing their recent publications with the public. Below, they've each written a short synopsis of their comments that day.

MIRA BALBERG on *Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (University of California Press, 2017)

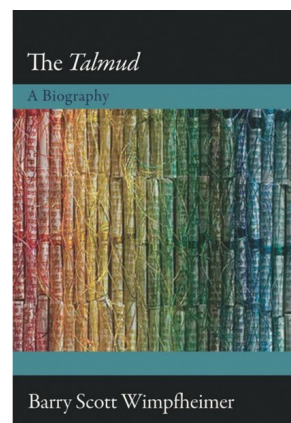
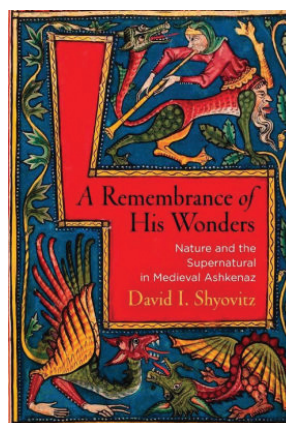
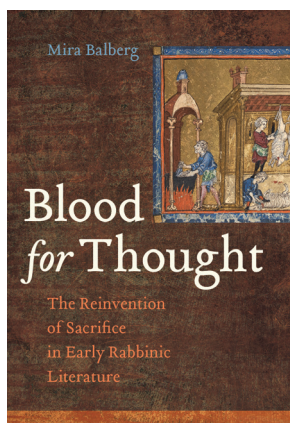
As a cultural historian of ancient Judaism, I am fascinated by changes and transformations in the notion of “what it means to be Jewish” that took place around the turn of the Common Era. The common paradigm in the study of ancient Judaism is this: when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed, a new elite of learned men called rabbis emerged. These rabbis, who created the voluminous and highly influential set of texts known as rabbinic literature — the Mishnah, Talmud, and *midrashim* — transformed Judaism forever. Before the rabbis, Jews thought that the best way to worship God was to burn lambs, bulls, and goats on an altar. It was natural for them to think that, not only because this is how all the peoples around them worshiped their gods, but also because this is what the Torah explicitly commands. The rabbis, however, devised ways to be Jewish without the need for sacrificing, and they did such a good job of it that most Jews today don't ever think they are missing something that was once crucial.

But did the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud really devise a Judaism without sacrifice? Did they really seek to spread the message that one can lead a complete Jewish life without a temple and an altar? While rabbinic literature was created after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, at least a quarter of this literature discusses sacrifices in great detail and gives elaborate instructions as to how sacrifices should be performed. My book, *Blood for Thought*, sets out to examine how the rabbis spoke about sacrifices and what they had to say about a practice that was ostensibly irrelevant in their time — and they had quite a lot to say about it. My research led me to the conclusion that the rabbis absolutely cannot be said to have envisioned Judaism without sacrifices: rather, sacrifices were an incredibly important practice for them and played a vital part in the rabbinic vision of Jewish life. However, the fact that sacrifices were as important for the rabbis as they were for earlier Jews does not mean that they were important to them *in the same way* that they were important for earlier Jews. I discovered that whereas earlier texts conceive of sacrifice primarily as way to communicate with God and to come to God's presence, the rabbis did not really think sacrifices worked this way. If one wanted to approach God, they suggested, prayer was probably better. But the rabbis thought that sacrifices were crucial in the organization and maintenance

of community life, in solidifying a social and religious identity, and in generating a commitment to the commandments. In this study, my close reading of neglected ancient texts ultimately overthrows some very well-established assumptions and reveals a more complicated and intriguing reality.

DAVID SHYOVITZ on *A Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and the Supernatural in Medieval Ashkenaz* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017)

The Jews of medieval Ashkenaz (Germany and northern France) have long had a reputation for benightedness and superstition. It is not hard to understand why this stereotype has taken root. After all, contemporaneous Sephardic figures like Maimonides and his intellectual heirs were deeply engaged with medicine and science, and crafted abstract, sophisticated treatises on the rational and philosophical dimensions of their Jewish heritage. Ashkenazic scholars, in contrast, composed books of magical spells and esoteric doctrines, and were intensely preoccupied by demonology, divination, zombies, werewolves, and other monstrous and wondrous creatures that seemed to destabilize any pretense of a rationally explicable natural order. Medieval Sephardic Jews looked disparagingly upon this Ashkenazic propensity for the wondrous and weird; modern historians have echoed these judgments and taken for granted that Ashkenazic immersion in the otherworldly and “supernatural” reflected a broader





Professors Wimpfheimer, Shyovitz, and Balberg in conversation at the 2018 Harris Day of Jewish Study

estrangement from the achievements of medieval Christian learned culture, which was at the time undergoing a scientific renaissance known as “the discovery of nature.”

A Remembrance of His Wonders disputes this long-standing, far-reaching consensus. In the book, I show that medieval Ashkenazic Jews wrote extensively about the workings and meaning of the natural world in general and of the human body in particular. Rather than reifying “nature” and “the supernatural” as binary categories, medieval Ashkenazic Jews consciously integrated scientific, medical, magical, and mystical traditions and discoveries into a sophisticated exploration of the boundaries between the mundane and the wondrous. Crucially, Ashkenazic beliefs and practices that have often been seen as signs of credulity and superstition in fact mirrored, and drew upon, contemporaneous Christian debates over the relationship between God and the natural world — suggesting that medieval Christians and Jews inhabited a shared culture, and profoundly shaped one another’s religious beliefs, practices, and values. Ultimately, medieval Ashkenazic Jews’ preoccupation with the apparently “supernatural” demonstrated neither ignorance nor intellectual isolation. Instead, it reflected a determined effort to understand nature’s inner workings and

outer limits, and to integrate and interrogate the theologies and ideologies of the broader European Christian society.

BARRY WIMPFHEIMER on *The Talmud: A Biography* (Princeton University Press, 2018)

The Babylonian Talmud (known simply as the Talmud) has been the central text of Judaism for the last millennium. While the Hebrew Bible is the core liturgical text, read regularly as part of synagogue ritual, the Talmud is the text that most fully embodies the ideology and practices that comprise Judaism. The Talmud has been the intellectual playground for Jewish elite minds since the tenth century CE if not earlier; it remains a primary portion of the curriculum for rabbis of all denominations today. In recent years the Talmud has become transformed into a lay study text by *Daf Yomi*, the study program that asks its participants to study one two-sided page of Talmud a day to complete the entire corpus in just over seven years’ time. Today the Talmud is studied by a larger and more diverse readership than ever.

My book *The Talmud: A Biography* embraces the conceit of its series (“Lives of Great Religious Books”) and describes the Talmud as if it were a living person. With chapter titles connected to stages of human life (e.g.

“Gestation” and “Anatomy”), *The Talmud: A Biography* provides the historical and literary context out of which the Talmud emerged, explains the mechanics of how talmudic passages produce meaning, and details the long and complex reception history of this important work of literature.

In my book, I argue that it is best to think of the Talmud as three separate Talmuds: the Essential Talmud, Enhanced Talmud, and Emblematic Talmud. The Essential Talmud is the original work of literature produced in Babylonia (contemporary Iraq) in the 3rd-7th centuries. The Enhanced Talmud is the conversation produced by various literatures of reception that were written to digest the Talmud from the 10th century to the present. The Emblematic Talmud is the drama that orbited around the Talmud as a symbol both within the Jewish community and outside of it. Academic scholars of the Talmud take greatest interest in the Essential Talmud. Traditional yeshiva students are most concerned with the Enhanced Talmud. Historians of different periods in which the Talmud became a source of contention engage the Emblematic Talmud.

One of the book’s most significant theses is the claim that a specific pattern can be perceived in the relationships between the Talmud and various modern factions of Judaism. Different factions (Hasidism, Reform, Feminism, Zionism, etc.) have initially identified the Talmud with tradition and resisted the corpus, even rejecting the Talmud outright. After being firmly established, though, these groups have each returned to reclaim and reinterpret the Talmud. These reclamations and reinterpretations have contributed to the tremendous diversity with which the Talmud operates intellectually today. Though its largest demographic is still Jewish, Orthodox, male, and straight, some of the most interesting interpretation and application of the Talmud is emerging from non-Jewish, non-Orthodox, female, and gay individuals and their communities. The book concludes with the idea that the Talmud, a living work, is still becoming itself.

REDISCOVERING LOST YIDDISH SONGS OF THE HOLOCAUST

The article below appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on May 8, 2018 following this year's Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick lecture in Jewish Civilization on May 7. Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune*



Psoy Korolenko

In the early 1940s, while World War II and the Holocaust were raging across Europe, a group of Soviet scholars began working on a most unusual task: collecting, editing and preserving songs written by Jews facing annihilation.

Ethnomusicologist Moisei Beregovsky and his colleagues put out a call in Yiddish newspapers urging Jews to send in their work. Handwritten texts (usually without

musical notation) began arriving from Jews across Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere. Some of the songs were penned by Jews escaping Nazi battalions, others by those serving in the Red Army, still others by survivors returning to villages that had been massacred.

Beregovsky hoped to publish this work as a document of Jewish life in the Soviet Union during a tragic era, but he was arrested during Stalin's reign of terror against Jews and others, the songs eventually disappearing into closed Soviet archives. Librarians in Ukraine rediscovered the manuscripts in the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, and recently scholar Anna Shternshis and singer-folklorist

Psoy Korolenko revived them in an irreplaceable album: "Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II."

Shternshis and Korolenko presented this repertoire Monday night at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in Evanston, in a revelatory program sponsored and planned by the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies at Northwestern University. For though the album represents a landmark achievement, the concert-lecture — "Last Yiddish Heroes: Lost and Found Songs of Soviet Jews During World War II" — gave this repertoire context and meaning that only a live performance can achieve.

The evening began startlingly, with Korolenko singing "Babi Yar," a 1947 song with lyrics by Golda Rovinskaya, a septuagenarian believed to have witnessed the murders of 33,771 Jews on Sept. 29-30, 1941. As Korolenko sang the words in Yiddish (to an old Yiddish melody), the English translation flashed on a screen onstage:

***By night and by day the gunshots
shattered,***

***The people saw their own deaths
approaching.***

Oh, blood gushed out from all sides,

The earth was stained red from

(all the) blood.

The room fell silent as the words issued from the lips of Korolenko, who accompanied himself at the piano.

Then scholar Shternshis spoke about the meaning of this evening and this project.

The songs that Beregovsky began receiving in 1942 were "talking about what was happening with Jews," said Shternshis. "Every single song was written by an amateur songwriter. Not a single one of the songs was known before."

The material came from ghettos in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, Vilna, Lodz and others, and they amounted to a diary of a people under mortal threat.

“Some of the songs were written as early as 1941,” said Shternshis, “which means that some of the first documents — documenting atrocities against Jews in Ukraine or Western part of Russia — were actually songs. People found it easier sometimes to document what they were witnessing (by) writing music about it, rather than telling (in) prose. Sometimes prose lacked emotional power” that music urgently provides.

Shternshis and Korolenko went on to prove the point, the scholar illuminating historical events described in verses Korolenko sang.

As in “Yoshke from Odessa,” a 1943 song by Berta Flaksman, the melody based on a popular tune by the great Russian composer Mikhail Glinka.

***For three full days he hailed them down,
firing one after the other.***

***Yoshke didn't stop firing bullets
from his rifle,***

***He bashed those fascists without
a care — not a bit of respect!***

“Revenge,” explained Shternshis, “is a central theme in these Red Army songs.” Furthermore, they show Jews in the Red Army fighting Nazis, establishing “that Jews do care and do fight as men, and they do it no worse than other soldiers.”

In effect, songs such as these were designed to counter the “very popular anti-Semitic myth that spread in the 1940s” that Jews were passive in war.

“This myth has no historical evidence,” said Shternshis. “But a myth does not need historical evidence.”

Along these lines, the lyrics to “My Machine Gun,” by an unknown author, celebrated a lethal instrument of liberation and vengeance.

“In 1944,” explained Shternshis, “a Jew having a machine gun and using this machine gun to fight against the army that destroys their people is a huge deal. And many, if not all, of our Red Army songs glorify the weapons that are given to them by the Red Army.”



Shternshis estimated that among the trove of material scholar Beregovsky collected, “about 30 percent of the archive are actually humorous songs.” And though that may seem counterintuitive considering the circumstances, dark comedy and piercing satire also were weapons of defense and revenge.

Thus in these songs Hitler emerges a fool, a clown and, most significantly, just one more villain in a line of them seeking to destroy Jews since biblical times.

So in the anonymous lyrics to “Purim Gifts for Hitler,” Korolenko sang a song tinged with hope:

You all set a goal

To erase me from the world.

***Except ... (my fate) does not
depend on you,***

Stalin has already tied your hands.

Why have Shternshis, Korolenko and their associates spent so much time and effort unearthing this work and presenting it to the public so many decades after it was created?

“These songs were never heard since 1947,” Shternshis told the crowd. “The songs had to be brought back to life as music, as art.”

Because the songs were written not by professional songwriters and poets but by ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, they give us an unexalted,

“People found it easier sometimes to document what they were witnessing (by) writing music about it, rather than telling (in) prose.”

Anna Shternshis



Anna Shternshis

ground-level view of bleak events and how they were perceived.

“The existence of this archive,” said Shternshis, “is revising our understanding of the Holocaust.”

And in a searingly eloquent way — through music.

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Renée and Lester Crown Speaker

“Life, Love, and Judaism: A Conversation about Writing and Spirituality”

On the evening of November 16, 2017, The Crown Family Center welcomed authors Tova Mirvis and Abigail Pogrebin for a conversation about their recently published memoirs. Mirvis' *Book of Separation* chronicles her movement away from Orthodox Judaism while Pogrebin's *My Jewish Year: 18 Holidays, One Wondering Jew* emerged from her study and celebration of the many fast days and feast days of Judaism. Claire Sufrin, assistant director of Jewish Studies, guided the authors through a conversation that touched on the process of writing about one's own life and the possibilities of finding spiritual meaning in the mundane details of daily existence. *For a video of this event, please visit jewish-israel-studies-center.northwestern.edu/multimedia-resources/media.html*

Allan and Norma Harris Day of Jewish Study

On Sunday, March 18, 2018, The Crown Family Center welcomed over 80 engaged community members to Northwestern's Evanston campus for the third annual Allan and Norma Harris Day of Jewish Study. Three faculty members – Mira Balberg, David Shyovitz, and Barry Wimpfheimer – presented synopses of their recent research publications and answered audience questions. Please see the story on page 4 for additional details.

“Dybbuks, Golems, and Messiahs: Alternative Bodies in the Beginning of Hebrew Theatre”

On a blustery January 23 evening and addressing an overflow crowd, Yair Lipschitz (Tel Aviv University) discussed how both the actors and scripts of early Hebrew theatre reflected the Zionist call for a new model of Jewishness.

Manfred H. Vogel Memorial Lecture in Jewish Studies

Leonard Cohen fans new and old gathered on April 24, 2018, for this year's Vogel lecture: “Songs of Praise in a Broken World: Leonard Cohen from ‘Story of Isaac’ (1969) to ‘You Want it Darker’ (2016).” Through a dynamic multimedia presentation, Stefano Perfetti of the University of Pisa examined the influence of the Jewish textual tradition on Cohen's music. *For a video of this event, please visit jewish-israel-studies-center.northwestern.edu/multimedia-resources/media.html*



Professor Stefano Perfetti

Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization

On May 7, 2018, professor Anna Shternshis (University of Toronto) and singer-musician Psoy Korolenko brought the Soviet Jewish experience of the 1940s to life through the analysis and performance of Yiddish songs written during the Second World War. Together, Shternshis' discussion and Korolenko's dynamic singing painted a rich picture of the loss of Jewish life and the ongoing hope for the defeat of the Nazis with sadness, humor, and satire. More than 500 attended the event, which was cosponsored by the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago. Please see the story on page 6 for additional details. *For a video of this event, please visit jewish-israel-studies-center.northwestern.edu/multimedia-resources/media.html*

Symposium on Water in Israel and the Middle East

As part of their ongoing collaboration, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, the Northwestern Center for Water Research, and the McCormick School of Engineering co-hosted their third annual symposium, “Transboundary Disputes and Collaborative Solutions”. The conference brought together speakers from Israel and the Middle East as well as local experts to discuss solutions to conflict in the region caused by water scarcity, advances in technologies of desalination and precision agriculture, socio-political aspects of water security in the Middle East, and ways in which NGOs are encouraging collaborative efforts to find peace and health in the region.

Faculty/Grad student colloquia

Under the direction of David Shyovitz, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies hosted lunchtime colloquia with local and visiting scholars.

November 8, 2017

“Israel at a Crossroads: The View from 30,000 Feet”

Dan Ben-David, Tel Aviv University

November 20, 2017

“One Jew, Two Opinions: The Social Role of Responsa in the Medieval Islamic World”

Phillip Lieberman, Vanderbilt University
Cosponsored by the Middle East
and North African Studies Program

January 22, 2018

“Performance and Text in Jewish Ritual”

Yair Lipshitz, Tel Aviv University
Cosponsored by the Department
of Religious Studies

February 12, 2018

“The Forgotten Pioneer: Jean Carroll, the First Jewish Female Comedian”

Grace Kessler Overbeke, PhD candidate in
the Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre
and Drama, Northwestern University



Authors Abigail Pogrebin and Tova Mirvis at the Crown Speaker Series event



The Klutznick lecture audience



Symposium on Water in Israel and the Middle East

March 13, 2018

“Consumption and the Economic Turn in Jewish History: When Women Disappeared”

Riv-Ellen Prell, University of Minnesota

April 12, 2018

“Violence and the Politics of Identity in Ancient Jewish Literature”

Yonatan Miller, University of Toledo

May 3, 2018

“Towards a Social History of Medieval Jewish Marriage: Individuals and Communities”

Elisheva Baumgarten, Hebrew University
 Cosponsored by the Medieval Studies Colloquium

June 4, 2018

“Sephardic Religious Revival in Israel”

Joseph Ringel, Northwestern University

Israel at 70: Social Fissures, Shared Aspirations

Visiting professor of Israel studies Manuel Trajtenberg discussed Israel's economy, society, and culture on April 11, 2018. Trajtenberg described the State of Israel's evolution since its birth as a nation in 1948 and addressed topics ranging from the challenges of a diverse population to the benefits of providing early childhood education for all. *For a video of this event, please visit: jewish-israel-studies-center.northwestern.edu/multimedia-resources/media.html.*

Please see page 16 for more information about Professor Trajtenberg's visit.

During his visit to Northwestern in spring 2018, Professor Manuel Trajtenberg also spoke at two workshops for faculty and students.

April 9, 2018

“The Challenges Facing Higher Education (with Israel as a case study)”

Response by Ofer Malamud, Northwestern University
 Cosponsored by SESP

April 18, 2018

“Israel's Great Paradox: Strong Macro, Poor Micro”

Cosponsored by the Department of Economics

Sephardic Jews from the Mediterranean to the New World

Under the direction of İpek Kocaömer Yosmaoglu, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies co-hosted three Sephardic Studies lectures with additional sponsorship from the Department of History, the Nicholas D. Chabraja Center for Historical Studies, the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program (Buffett Institute), and the Sava Ranisavljevic Fund. *Please see the story on page 10 for additional details.*

April 19, 2018

“Like Negros...and Mohammedans: Sephardic Jews in the American Racial Imagination”

Devin Naar, University of Washington

April 26, 2018

“Between the Ottoman Empire and Italy: The Jews of Rhodes 1880-1936”

Aron Rodrigue, Stanford University

May 3, 2018

“Remembering 1492: Ottoman Jews and the Spanish Past”

Julia Phillips Cohen, Vanderbilt University

SPOTLIGHT ON SEPHARDIC STUDIES

With a new course, public lectures, and the co-founding of an international symposium, Northwestern historian İpek Kocaömer Yosmaoglu contributes to the rise of Sephardic Studies.

Though Jewish Studies scholarship has long been shaped by an emphasis on the experiences of Central and Eastern European Jewries (Ashkenazim), Sephardic Studies — an area focused on Judeo-Spanish-speaking Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula — has generated accelerating international attention over recent decades.

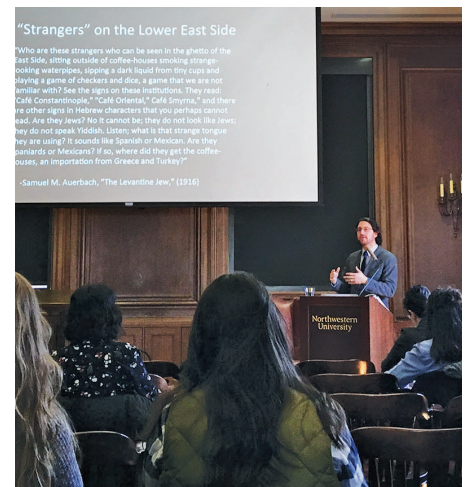
And with a new research seminar and lecture series at Northwestern University as well as an international symposium at the University of Graz, İpek Kocaömer Yosmaoglu is contributing to the scholarly field's ascent.

“Sephardic Studies was uncharted territory until recently, but is now a growing field that holds exciting opportunities for research and deeper understanding of Jewish life and culture,” said Yosmaoglu, an associate professor in the Department of History.

Spurred by her own research concerning Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the 20th century interwar period, Yosmaoglu launched a new research seminar titled “Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism” in the spring 2018 quarter.

Reading research from some of Sephardic Studies’ pioneering scholars and examining primary sources ranging from the letters of Judeo-Spanish language champions to Jerusalem-based journalists, Yosmaoglu and her students explored how Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire dealt with the influence of nationalist movements and the conflicting agendas of the Great Powers, particularly after the demise of the Ottoman Empire when Ottoman Jews became “minorities” in various successor states.

“The course offered a rich opportunity to discuss the differences between empires and nation-states and how religious com-



Professor Devin Naar

munities, specifically those not dominant in an area, handled these periods of transition,” Yosmaoglu said.

The inaugural course was strengthened by visits from a trio of leading Sephardic Studies scholars: Stanford University historian Aron Rodrigue, whose groundbreaking work spurred the field’s rise; Devin Naar of the University of Washington; and Julia Phillips Cohen of Vanderbilt University. All three scholars offered campus lectures before engaging in private conversation with Yosmaoglu’s students. The talks were cosponsored by the Department of History, the Nicholas D. Chabraja Center for Historical Studies, the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program (Buffett Institute), and the Sava Ranisavljevic Fund.

“It was not only instructive for students to connect with these scholars shaping the field and to see details of their in-progress work, but also for the students to see how historians progress through their research,” Yosmaoglu said.



Masthead from *La America* 1913-14

Benjamin Frommer, an associate professor in the Department of History, said the public programs underscored “how vibrant the field of Sephardic Studies has become in recent years.”

“The presentations broadened The Crown Family Center’s traditional focus and offered insight into the development of the Sephardim as actual and imagined communities on Rhodes, in the United States, and in their ancestral home of Iberia,” Frommer said.

Idil Ozkan, a graduate student in linguistic anthropology whose dissertation project explores Spain’s 2015 citizenship offer to Sephardic Jews, took Yosmaoglu’s course hoping to develop a historical approach to Turkish Jews’ conceptions of homeland, citizenship, and belonging. In that way and more, she said, the course delivered.

“This course provided me a massive opportunity to grasp the historical background of the Sephardim’s language attitudes and how they go hand in hand with notions of modernity, citizenship, and identity,” Ozkan said, adding that it was “fascinating” to learn about Ottoman Jews’ distinct political allegiances, their heterogeneous positionings towards Zionism and Ottomanism, and the changing notions of imperial citizenship.

With limited previous exposure to Jewish Studies, Lyndsey Armacost, a senior majoring in journalism and history, called Yosmaoglu’s course an eye-opening experience.

“I enjoyed learning about Sephardic Jews in so many different contexts, different centuries, and regions of the world,” Armacost said. “We spent every day talking about a new country or a new immigrant group and how it all fit into a larger puzzle.”

Yosmaoglu felt students appreciated learning about a culturally and historically significant, albeit long-overlooked, group.

“I hope the students received a firm base of facts about Sephardic Jews and also gained a sense of scholarly curiosity they’ll carry with them,” she said.



Above, The Salonica Restaurant and Café in New York (photo contributed by Robert Ligung). To left, clockwise, Professors Devin Naar, Julia Phillips Cohen, Ipek Yosmaoglu, and Aron Rodrigue

“We spent every day talking about a new country or a new immigrant group and how it all fit into a larger puzzle.”

Lyndsey Armacost, Medill '18

For her part, Yosmaoglu will continue contributing to the fast-rising Sephardic Studies field beyond Northwestern.

This past June, in fact, Yosmaoglu teamed with Professor Kerem Öktem of the University of Graz in Austria, to organize an international symposium exploring the Jewish lifeworlds the Ottoman/Turkish Sephardim created across the globe as well as the group’s experience as a distinct diasporic class in Israel.

Held at the University of Graz, the inaugural symposium — “Jewish-Turkish Entanglements: Resilience, Migration, and the New Diasporas” — featured presentations from

scholars, journalists, NGO members, and community activists from the U.S., Turkey, Israel, Austria, and France as well as a concert of Sephardic songs performed by Aron Saltiel, whose contributions served as a vivid reminder of Judeo-Spanish culture’s survival across centuries.

“The energy at the symposium underscored the accelerated interest in Sephardic Studies and its related areas and speaks to the compelling stories and insights the field holds,” Yosmaoglu said.

STEPHANIE BRENZEL (Religious Studies) is a PhD candidate specializing in Modern Jewish Thought. She spent the 2017-2018 academic year doing archival work for her dissertation: “As Strong as Death: Franz Rosenzweig’s Philosophy of Love in The Star of Redemption.” She was awarded a Northwestern Research Grant and the Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy Fund Research Grant to conduct research at Universität Kassel, Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche von Westfalen in Bielefeld, and Dartmouth College.

TOVA MARKENSON (Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama) visited archives in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Israel to research her dissertation on performances of Jewish feminine sexuality and Latin American Yiddish theatre. Her transnational research was possible thanks to the generous support of the American Association for Jewish Research, the Chicago YIVO Society, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, the Sexualities Project at Northwestern, the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, Northwestern’s School of Communication, and the Graduate School. Markenson presented at the Latin American Jewish Studies Regional Conference and the Institute of Art and Performance (University of Buenos Aires), while she also published a review of Paula Vogel’s play *Indecent* in *In Geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies* and contributed interviews with former Argentine Yiddish actors to the Digital Yiddish Theatre Project.

RACHEL MERRILL MOSS (Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama) passed her qualifying exams, had her paper about mid-century Jewish American pageants written with Professor Gary Fine (Sociology) accepted into the *Journal of American Theatre and Drama* fall 2018 issue, and was elected Vice President of the American Society for Theatre Research Graduate Student Caucus, where she also presented a paper in the Eastern European studies working group. In April, Moss

used Graduate Research Grant funding to research one of her dissertation case studies in Warsaw: the full-day commemorative action for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Akcja Żonkile. In August 2018, with support from The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies and the Buffett Institute, she presented a paper at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference about the Warsaw Jewish Theatre’s 2016 protest performance of “Fiddler on the Roof.”

GRACE KESSLER OVERBEKE (Interdisciplinary Program in Theatre and Drama) taught Comics and Actors — American Jews on Stage & Screen in the fall quarter. As the 2017-2018 Crown Fellow, she completed two chapter drafts of her dissertation and offered a series of talks and presentations. In February, Overbeke presented “The Forgotten Pioneer: Jean Carroll, the First Female Jewish Standup Comedian” at a Jewish Studies lunchtime colloquium. The following month, she presented “Ethnicity and Jewish Comedy in the United States” at The Second City at Columbia College and (with Anne Libera) “Women of Jewish Comedy” at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership in June. She also penned a number of articles relating to contemporary pop culture in *The Forward* and taught at a local synagogue.

VANDA RAJCAN (History) received a Fulbright fellowship to conduct research on postwar justice in Slovakia. After World War II, Slovak retribution courts tried 20,550 cases and rendered 8,045 guilty verdicts in less than three years. Her dissertation examines one of the most contested aspects of postwar Slovak retribution: the prosecution of Holocaust-related crimes, including the persecution of Jews, the seizure and transfer of Jewish property to non-Jewish hands (Aryanization), exploitation, denunciations, and deportations. She presented her preliminary findings at the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Vienna.

BENJAMIN RICCIARDI (Religious Studies) has been continuing his work on his dissertation, *The Weekday Amidah as a Jewish Philosophical Response to the Problem of Evil*. The dissertation argues for understanding the weekday Amidah as a performative anti-theodicy, a simultaneous acknowledgment of and protest against the problem of evil. In the last academic year, he delivered papers at the conferences of the American Philosophical Association, the Association for Jewish Studies, and the Society for Jewish Ethics.

ANASTASIIA SIMFEROVSKA (Slavic Languages and Literatures) focuses on art and literature in 20th century Eastern Europe. In 2017-2018, Simferovska gave a keynote presentation at the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure seminar in Lviv and at the international symposium “Shoah in Ukraine” in Paris on Jewish artists in Lviv/Lwow/Lemberg during the Holocaust. She also organized a “Modernism in the Margins” panel at the 2017 Association for Slavic, Eastern European, & Eurasian Studies convention, where she spoke about the ways Polish artist of Armenian descent Kajetan Stefanowicz integrated his nationalist strivings with modernistic imagery. Simferovska taught a mini-course, “Art and Identity in fin-de-siècle Eastern Galicia,” at the Free Ukrainian University in Munich. In June, she defended her Master’s thesis on “Isaak Babel’s Red Cavalry and its Chronotope.”

AMANDA RUPPENTHAL STEIN (Musicology) is writing a dissertation on how art music was used by German-speaking Jews both to express assimilation and to redefine Jewish personal and communal identities in the 19th century. In fall 2017, Stein had a paper presented at the national conference of the American Musicological Society. She is the 2018-19 recipient of the Crown Graduate Fellowship from The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies.

CROWN GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

ARIEL WEINER (German and Comparative Literary Studies) completed her first year of doctoral course work and received a certificate from Northwestern's Critical Theory Cluster. She was awarded funding from The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies to attend the Summer Institute: Psychoanalysis and the Media – the Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3 in June, and received a Summer Language Travel Grant from the Graduate School to pursue a German language intensive at the Sprachakademie Aachen in July. Weiner has also received a fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which will provide additional support for her continued graduate studies at Northwestern.

SARAH WOLF (Religious Studies) defended her dissertation, "The Rabbinic Legal Imagination: Narrativity and Scholasticism in the Babylonian Talmud," and accepted a position as assistant professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary. A David Hartman Center Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, Wolf was also named a finalist for the Association for Jewish Studies Dissertation Completion Fellowship. At the Association for Jewish Studies' annual conference in December, she presented her paper titled "The Construction of a Rabbinic Rebel: Rabbi Yirmiyah and Characterization in the Bavli."

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies awards the Crown Graduate Fellowship annually to one Northwestern graduate student whose dissertation research bears on an aspect of Jewish history, culture, or religion.

Amanda Ruppenthal Stein, a student in the Department of Musicology in the Bienen School of Music, is the recipient of the Crown Graduate Fellowship for 2018-2019. Stein's dissertation, "Sounding Judentum: Assimilation, Art Music, and Being Jewish Musically in 19th Century Germany," focuses on expressions of identity in Western art music. The project aims to bridge existing gaps between Jewish musicology and the study of Jewish culture and art more broadly while also contributing to 19th century German music scholarship. In particular, Stein seeks to understand how art music was used by German-speaking Jews both to express assimilation and to redefine Jewish personal and communal identities in the 19th century. Assistant director of Jewish



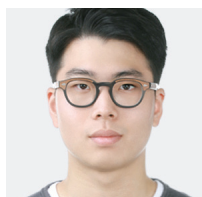
Amanda Ruppenthal Stein

Studies Claire Sufrin notes that "Stein's research bridges the existing gaps between Jewish musicology and the study of Jewish culture and art more broadly. She asks: Why should historians and religionists not ask what Jews were listening to, musically, as they ask what books and newspapers they were reading? Her work offers to make music more accessible to these scholars so that they can ask this question and begin to understand the importance of the answers they find."

JILL STACEY HARRIS PRIZE IN JEWISH STUDIES

The Jill Stacey Harris Prize has been awarded annually since 1991 for the best undergraduate essay in Jewish Studies. In 2018, two outstanding students earned the award.

JUN KYUNG YOU, a junior majoring in philosophy, was honored for his paper “Morality as Means or Part of an End: Obscurities Surrounding the Status

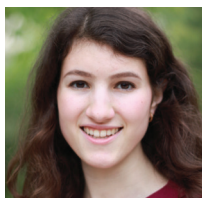


Jun Kyung You

of Moral Perfection in Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed*, written for professor Ken Seeskin’s course on Maimonides. You’s essay provided a clear,

convincing, and captivating analysis of a central problem in Maimonides’ moral theory: the relative value of intellectual versus moral perfection. By careful analysis, You arrived at a subtle conclusion that presented each as equally valuable, depending on the chosen premises of the argument. As indicated in his final paragraphs, this conclusion can be seen as a starting point for a re-evaluation of similar problems in Maimonides’ treatise, whereby he seems to provide valid arguments for apparently contradictory positions.

ADINA GOLDMAN, a 2018 graduate in religious studies, was a prizewinner for the second time. Goldman’s essay “Rainmaker: Power, Presumption, and Precipitation in the Stories of Honi the Circle Maker,” was



Adina Goldman

written for professor Richard Kieckhefer’s religion and magic course. Her essay served as a lively, well-structured, and finely argued contribution to scholarship



Yadid Licht

concerning the Talmudic figure of Honi. Delving into the relationship between Honi’s actions as a miracle worker and his Biblical predecessors, especially Elijah, the essay productively engages with a variety of contemporary scholars on its way to a surprising and convincing conclusion: the stories of Honi demonstrate that he must “humble himself” and speak “wholly on behalf of those in need: the people.”

2018 JEWISH STUDIES MINORS

Congratulations to Class of 2018 Jewish Studies minors, Max Zuo and Yadid Licht. We asked them to reflect on their studies:

MAX shares: “I initially took a few Jewish studies classes because of a unique summer opportunity in Israel. I did not come from a Jewish family, so I just wanted to learn more about the culture and language beforehand. To my surprise, the content of the classes were for the most part friendly for non-Jewish students like me — I was able to participate and engage in discussions just like in any other humanities class offered at the University. While the classes can be challenging at times, the professors were immensely patient and understanding.

After an amazing summer in Israel, I was even more intrigued by the culture there and was determined to finish the Jewish studies minor. After graduation, I will be working in finance in Hong Kong. However, hopefully I will get the chance to go back and work in Israel in the future.”

YADID writes: “Entering Northwestern from a Jewish day school background, I already held a deep interest in and knowledge of Judaism. My courses in the Jewish Studies program, however, provided me with a much different approach to the study of Judaism than I had in high school, as I learned to study Jewish texts and commentaries with a more academic, critical, and historical approach. I especially enjoyed taking Jewish history courses, where I gained a more nuanced understanding of the ways Jews related to societies in the past, and how this history connects to the present. Following graduation, I plan to stay engaged in the Jewish community and in Jewish learning.”

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS IN ISRAEL STUDIES

Every year, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, in partnership with Tel Aviv University, and the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, hosts two postdoctoral fellows in Israel Studies. The 2017-18 fellows were Efrat Daskal and Joseph Ringel.

EFRAAT DASKAL, a scholar of communications, taught two courses in 2017-2018. The first, about media and minorities in Israel, focused on relationships between minority groups and the mass media. Students also gained basic familiarity with the social conflicts that exist within Israeli society. The second course dealt with media and nationality in Israel, exploring the topic of nationality through the development of the Israeli mass media system from the 19th century onward. Daskal also gave guest lectures in several other Northwestern courses. In addition, Daskal continued research from her dissertation on the creation of an “accountable culture” in relationship to the role of the media regulator in Israel. She worked as well on research on the role of young people at the Internet Governance Forum (a United

Nations-supported multi-stakeholder forum that has convened annually since 2006 to discuss issues of internet governance) and a comparative project analyzing the activities of civil society organizations that advocate for digital rights (e.g. freedom of speech online, privacy, net neutrality) in Israel and elsewhere. The latter was funded by the Internet Policy Observatory at the Annenberg School, University of Pennsylvania. She presented her research at the International Communication Association conference and at the annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers. Over the summer, she organized a conference about digital rights activism in Israel together with the Cyber Security Research Center at the Hebrew University and Internet Society - Israel.

Over the past academic year, **JOSEPH RINGEL** completed a draft of his book manuscript on Sephardic religious culture. The book discusses the reconstruction of Sephardic/Mizrahi identity in Israeli Sephardic yeshivas and the Shas school system. As such, his work seeks to define the Sephardic rabbinic tradition sixty years after the creation of the State of Israel, which re-cast the socio-ideological background of pre-state Sephardic culture following the mass immigration of Jews from Islamic lands. By highlighting the debates within the Sephardic world regarding whether Shas’ reconstruction of “Sephardic” identity accurately reflects the culture of “Sephardic” Jews in the Islamic world, his research illuminates the complexities of connecting past experiences to modern realities and shows how historical narratives drive contemporary ideologies. Ringel presented his research at the Association for Israel Studies Conference in June.

“Your support provided me the opportunity to grow professionally and to contribute to the Northwestern community, the greater academic community, and the lay Chicago community at large.”

Joseph Ringel



Efrat Daskal



Joseph Ringel

In addition, Ringel taught three courses. The first focused on the interaction of religion and state in Israel, exploring the historical, ideological, cultural, and political factors that led to this arrangement. His second course covered the Sephardic/Mizrahi and Ashkenazi divide in Israel — a divide that has long plagued social-political relations. His final course, “The Settlement Movement and the National Religious Camp in Israel,” examined the history, ideology, and politics of Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza, exploring its nuances and complexities, exposing its problematic elements, and searching for ways to imagine a successful resolution to conflicting claims to land.

ISRAEL STUDIES VISITING SCHOLARS

In 2018, The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies hosted two Israeli economists as visiting scholars: Professor Manuel Trajtenberg of Tel Aviv University and Professor Joseph Zeira of Hebrew University.

One of Israel's leading economists, **MANUEL TRAJTENBERG** received his PhD from Harvard University, has been a professor of Economics at Tel Aviv University since 1984 and previously served as chairman of the Higher Education System in Israel (2009-2014). Prior to that, he established and served as the first head of the National Economic Council at the Israeli Prime Minister's Office (2006-2009). He was appointed chairman of the Committee for Economic and Social Change following mass social protests which took place in Israel in 2011. Trajtenberg joined the Zionist Union list in December 2014 and was elected to the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) in 2015. He left politics in 2017. Trajtenberg gave one public lecture, "Israel at 70: Social Fissures, Shared Aspirations," during his visit. He offered one workshop for students and faculty of the School of Education and Social Policy, "The Challenges Facing Higher Education: Israel as a Case Study," and one for students and faculty in the Department of Economics, "Israel's Great Paradox: Strong Macro, Poor Micro."

JOSEPH ZEIRA is the Aaron and Michael Chilewich Professor of Economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on macroeconomics, economic growth, and the economy of Israel. The former president of the Israeli Economics Association (2016-2017), Zeira has published in the leading economics journals, has served as an advisor to the Ministry of Finance, and was a member of a government committee studying poverty in Israel. He is also a member of the Aix group, which studies the costs of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and economic aspects of potential peace agreements. While at Northwestern, Zeira taught ECON 315, "Economic History of Israel."

Of Trajtenberg and Zeira's time at Northwestern, Martin Eichenbaum, director of The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies and the Charles Moskos Professor of Economics, said: "Their visits represent an important expansion of the Israel studies program beyond its traditional scope, allowing the community to benefit from their insights into the accomplishments and challenges facing the Israeli economy."



Joseph Zeira



Manuel Trajtenberg

“Their visits represent an important expansion of the Israel studies program beyond its traditional scope, allowing the community to benefit from their insights into the accomplishments and challenges facing the Israeli economy.”

Martin Eichenbaum
Director of The Crown Family Center
for Jewish and Israel Studies

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Support from donors like you helps The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies to achieve our mission. Your gift can:

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- bring exciting scholars to campus for community events

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3. Send your check, payable to Northwestern University, to Office of Alumni Relations and Development, Northwestern University, 1201 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60208.

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With Gratitude to Our Supporters

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies gratefully acknowledges the support of the following individuals and families, whose support over the last two years enhanced all aspects of our work.

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2017-18 COURSES

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Introduction to Judaism
Art of Rabbinic Narrative
Jews and the Transgender Moment
A Rabbi and a Priest Walk into a Bar to Talk about God
Reading the Talmud
Jewish History 1492-1789
Jewish History 1789-1948
The "Blood Libel"
Christians and Jews
Jews and Germans: An Intercultural History
Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism
Comics and Actors: American Jews on Stage
Literary Images of the Shtetl
Modern Jewish Literature in Translation
Tales of Love and Darkness: Modern Hebrew Literature
Storytelling in American Jewish Literature
History of the Holocaust
Gender, Race, and the Holocaust
Holocaust Memory, Memorials and Museums
Holocaust Perpetrator and Denial Trials
God after the Holocaust
Arabs in Israel
Economic History of Israel
Religion and Politics in Israel
Media & Nationality: Israel as Case Study
Media & Minorities: Israel as Case Study
The Occidental-Oriental Divide in Israel
The Settlement Movement and the National Religious Camp in Israel
Water in Israel and the Middle East
Hebrew I, II, and III

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