

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

2023-2024
Annual Report

The teacher you see in the top of the page...

and if

*If I could see him again
he would tell me the
story of his teacher.*

*He would tell me the
story of him.*

Northwestern

THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES

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Cover: *The Curious Invention of M. Shoshani's Library* by Jacqueline Nicholls (2019). See pg. 18.

Northwestern

Crown Family Center for
Jewish and Israel Studies

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends: On the evening of October 6, 2023, observant Jews all around the world recited a brief and cryptic liturgical blessing. They had spent the preceding week celebrating the holiday of Sukkot (“The Feast of Tabernacles”), which involves gathering, eating, or even sleeping outdoors in makeshift huts (in Hebrew, *sukkot*). On the final night of the seven-day celebration, tradition dictates that they recite a brief prayer to mark the conclusion of the holiday:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוהינו ואלוהי אבותינו
ששם שקיימתי וישבתי בסוכה זה, כן אזכה
לשנה הבאה לשב בסוכת עורו של לוינו

Very roughly translated, it means “May it be your will, God of our fathers, that just as I sat in this temporary dwelling this year, so may I sit next year in the Sukkah of the messianic era”—in a new, permanent dwelling that represents a healed, repaired, perfected world.

It makes sense that the Jewish tradition associated this prayer for a perfected world specifically with the holiday of Sukkot, which is perhaps the most universalistic holiday in the Jewish calendar. According to the Hebrew Bible (in Numbers 29), the Israelites were to sacrifice a total of 70 offerings over the course of the seven days of the holiday—which the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud (*Sukkah* 55b) understood to correspond to the 70 nations of the world. On Sukkot, that is, Jews were required to beseech God not on their own behalf, but on behalf of all of humanity. Symbolically, we might say, Sukkot was the holiday when Jews left their personal, familial dwellings and went outside the walls of their own homes into the broader world, to work with and for people from all religious and national backgrounds.

But the day after Sukkot—on the festival of Shmini Atzeret, the supplementary eighth day of the seven-day holiday—Jews depart their outdoor huts, return to their own homes, and tack a particularistic epilogue onto this universalistic celebration. The Torah instructs the Israelites to offer just a single sacrifice on the eighth day, and the rabbis understand this to mean that once they had prayed and interceded for the wider world as a whole, Jews were permitted—required, actually—to focus their attention inward, just for a little while.

According to the Talmud, the single bull of the eighth day “corresponds to a singular nation”—the Jewish people, a singular nation among the 70 nations of the world who merit one day to focus exclusively on their own needs and welfare.

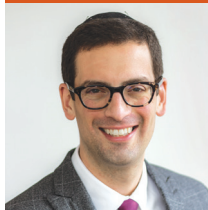
This past Shmini Atzeret, of course, was Saturday, October 7, 2023. I first learned of the horrific massacres in the south of Israel while I sat in synagogue that morning, listening to the Torah reading about the solitary sacrificial offering of the holiday. Over the course of the past year—as the vicarious trauma of October 7 was compounded by the grinding hostage crisis, the bloody and horrifying war in Gaza, the political upheaval and deep social divisions that have characterized Israeli and American societies—I have found myself thinking often of the “singular” status of the Jewish people. What does the Jewish State owe to the 70 nations of the world, and what do those nations owe the “singular nation” in return? What is the appropriate balance between urgent national interest and overarching international solidarity? Between Jewishness as a particular national identity and Judaism as an expansive spiritual and ethical worldview?

The contemporary Jewish world has grappled painfully with these questions, and often with much bitterness. The Jewish people, many argue, have invested heavily in universalism, leaning into the moral values that animate the Jewish tradition—caring for the oppressed, loving the stranger, and pursuing peace and justice. Perhaps the greatest watchword of contemporary Jewish culture is *tikkun olam*—repairing the world, ushering in a perfected society for everyone, regardless of religious background or national identity. Many proponents of this outward-facing Jewishness—the Jewishness of the 70 offerings of Sukkot—have described their feelings of abandonment at the hands of the United Nations, or the progressive left, or the halls of academia as reports of Hamas’s atrocities were coming to light. As synagogues around the world were being vandalized, as reports of sexual violations were being minimized or denied, as visibly Jewish demonstrators or passersby on campuses were being singled out for verbal or physical violence—as the Jewish

community asked for reciprocation of the universal care they had been so willing and eager to dole out—many felt they were experiencing October 7 on repeat, trapped in Shmini Atzeret, isolated as a singular nation cut off from the rest of the world.

But still others have accused Israel and the broader Jewish community of parochialism and insularity, of an overemphasis on Jewish suffering at the expense of Israel's victims, past and present. Some Jews, especially young Jews on university campuses, have argued sincerely that their Jewish values demand a subordination of particularism to universalism, advocating for a de-territorialized Judaism that grants the Israelites no political or ethical precedence over the 70 nations of the world. Rather than sequestering themselves behind the walls of their own homes, some of these Jews have returned to their temporary huts—or, say, tent encampments—to model an outward-facing Judaism that they see as equally rooted in canonical texts.

I have my own strongly held views about the current crisis in Israel—and I know some of my colleagues and students have their own opposing perspectives that are just as deeply rooted. And it turns out that a university campus is the ideal setting in which to express, explore, debate, or even reconsider the religious, political, and ethical commitments that are at the core of the ongoing controversies over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the nature and demands of Jewish identity. At universities like Northwestern, students with strongly held views about Israel and Palestine can deepen and nuance their existing perspectives, and those with no background knowledge—the vast majority, incidentally—can access the kind of information and context that slogans at rallies and clips on social media are unable to provide. But to do so, they must recognize what universities are uniquely equipped to offer: classes taught by world-leading experts; libraries filled with sophisticated, vetted works of scholarship; and training in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and any other language needed to gain unmediated access to events on the ground. Activism and advocacy can and should be a part of students' campus experiences—but



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David Shyovitz

activism that is devoid of serious academic knowledge is shallow and ultimately self-defeating.

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies has invested enormous energy over the past year trying to make Northwestern a campus where historical knowledge, political sensitivity, and religious competency are core values rather than mere afterthoughts. Of course, academics do not speak with a single voice and the debates that have roiled the world are sometimes reflected in our own campus discourse. But in our classrooms, at our public events, and in our scholarship, my colleagues, students, and I take a more deliberate approach to these debates than social media or the 24-hour news cycle allow for. We consider, for example, whether antisemitism is a unique historical phenomenon or just one manifestation of broader patterns of racism, or xenophobia, or bigotry. We consider what Jewish thought can contribute to the broader philosophical tradition, and how the latter has shaped Jewish texts and ideas in turn. We compare modern Hebrew language and literature with other global traditions, and interrogate the utility of theories such as queer theory and postcolonialism for understanding the Jewish past and present. In other words, we toggle between Sukkot, with its broadening, outward facing orientation to the rest of the academic world, and Shmini Atzeret, with its deep, focused attention on Jewish texts and ideas per se. These classes, programs, and discussions are not meant

solely for Jewish students. Since October 7, our offerings have attracted more diverse enrollments than ever, as it has become increasingly clear that knowledge of Jewish and Israel Studies are essential for an understanding of the contemporary world.

It is not lost on me that university campuses in general, and Northwestern in particular, have attracted intense attention and even condemnation from some politicians, community groups, and worried parents. But despite the many challenges we face, I remain convinced of the indispensability of the work we do, and I remain bullish about the potential of Jewish and Israel Studies to generate more and more light in the midst of the heat of the present moment. I hope you will be inspired in the coming year to join us on campus for an academic or cultural program and to partner with us as we work to expand our students' academic horizons. I would be delighted to speak with any of you who would like to share your hopes, concerns, or ideas for how we can meet the pressing needs of the moment.

David Shyovitz
Director, Crown Family Center
for Jewish and Israel Studies,
Northwestern University

2023-2024 EVENTS

Teach-In on Current Events in Israel and Gaza

Monday, October 16 at 7 pm in Norris Lake Room #203

Northwestern faculty experts will provide historical, political, and cultural context to help you understand current events in Israel and Gaza, beyond the headlines.



Audience at the Difficult Conversations event



Sayed Kashua

Teach-In on Current Events in Israel and Gaza

On October 16, just days after the October 7 attack in Israel, faculty from the Crown Family Center held a “teach-in,” with the goal of providing historical and political perspective for Northwestern students who did not have extensive background knowledge. David Shyovitz moderated a discussion among faculty members Maayan Hilel, who discussed the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Shmulik Nili, who reflected upon the philosophical and ethical dimensions of the ongoing fighting; and Hanna Seltzer, who highlighted the tragic personal experiences of Israelis during and after the Hamas incursion.

“Difficult Conversations on Israel and Palestine: How Can We Talk and Disagree on Fraught Subjects?”

The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies and the Middle East and North African Studies Program presented a special event for Northwestern students on November 13, 2023. Crown Family Center director David Shyovitz participated in an open dialogue with Professor Wendy Pearlman (MENA), with the goal of modeling how interlocutors with dramatically divergent political views can engage in productive and civil



Asaf Elia Shalev, Maayan Hilel and
Henriette Dahan Kalev

dialogue. Shyovitz and Pearlman discussed their understandings of such contested terms as “antisemitism,” “Zionism,” “occupation,” “apartheid,” and “genocide.” A large crowd of students, faculty, and Northwestern community members participated in a vigorous but collegial question and answer session.

The Last Chapter of A.B. Yehoshua

Film screening followed by a conversation with the film’s director, Yair Qeder.

The Last Chapter of A.B. Yehoshua (2021) is a celebrated documentary about the Israeli author and peace activist A.B. Yehoshua (1936-2022). The film is part of filmmaker Yair Qader’s celebrated series, *Ha-Ivrin* (The Hebrews), which includes 18 biographical documentaries dedicated to prominent Jewish authors. The Crown Center hosted a screening of this film on January 24, followed by a conversation with the film’s director, Yair Qeder.

Renée and Lester Crown Speaker Series

“Sayed Kashua on Humor, Hope, and Hopelessness”

The 2024 installment of the Crown Speaker Series featured Sayed Kashua, an acclaimed author, humorist, and screenwriter who is a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Kashua reflected on his own multifaceted identity, tensions between Jews and Arabs in Israeli society, and the power and limitations of comedy, especially in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks. More than 200 audience members attended and learned from Kashua’s moving personal recollections and hilarious film clips from his various television series.

“Israeli Black Panthers”

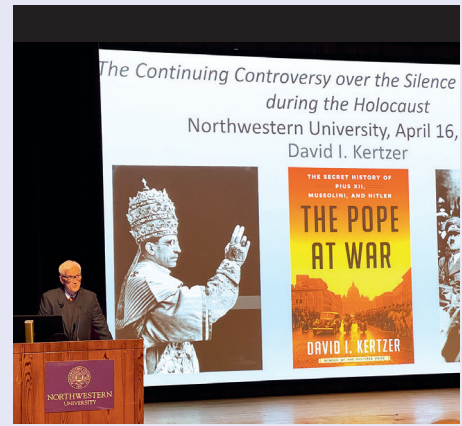
On April 11, 2024, the Crown Family Center hosted a panel on Israel’s Black Panthers featuring Professor Henriette Dahan Kalev from Ben Gurion University and Israeli American journalist Asaf Elia Shalev. The speakers discussed the struggle and legacy of the Israeli Black Panthers, a Mizrahi activist movement inspired by the American Black Panthers who fought for racial and ethnic equality in the 1970s in Israel and reshaped the nation’s socio-political landscape.

The Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization

“The Continuing Controversy Over the Silence of Pope Pius XII During the Holocaust”

Professor David Kertzer of Brown University addressed the controversy over the role Pope Pius XII played—or chose not to play—during the Holocaust. Following his death in 1958, Pius’s papers were sealed in the Vatican Secret Archives, leaving unanswered questions about what he knew and did during World War II. Those questions grew and festered, making Pius XII one of the most controversial popes in Church history, especially once the Vatican began preparations to canonize him. In 2020, Pius XII’s archives were finally opened, and Kertzer has been mining this new material ever since. In his talk on April 16, 2024, Kertzer argued that the pope set aside moral leadership in order to preserve his church’s power.

Co-sponsored by Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago.



David Kertzer



David Kertzer and Benjamin Frommer



Yair Qeder



Magda Teter

Manfred H. Vogel Lecture in Judaic Studies

“Christian Supremacy: On Reckoning with the Roots of Antisemitism and Racism”

Professor Magda Teter of Fordham University delivered the 2024 Manfred H. Vogel Memorial Lecture on May 28, 2024. Before a crowd of nearly a hundred attendees, she highlighted the commonalities between and shared historical roots of both antisemitism and anti-Black racism—bridging two important topics that are frequently studied in isolation from one another.

2023-2024 EVENTS



Shay Hazkani

Israel and Palestine: Joint Speaker Series Exploring Fundamental History

Sponsored by The Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies, the Middle East and North African Studies Program, and the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. See pages 12-13 for additional details on the series.

April 4 "Late Ottoman Palestine,"
Awad Halabi, Wright State University

April 9 "Zionisms: Variations on
a Theme," Arie Dubnov, George
Washington University

April 15 "WWI and European
Intervention," Elizabeth F. Thompson,
American University

April 25 "Foundations of Palestinian
Nationalism," Nadim Bawalsa,
Journal of Palestine Studies

May 6 "The 1948 War," Shay Hazkani,
University of Maryland

May 21 "Post 1948 Transformations I:
the Nakba and Palestinian Identity,"
Leena Dallasheh, Independent Scholar

May 29 "Post 1948 Transformations II:
Arab Jews Before and After
Israeli Statehood," Maayan Hilel,
Northwestern University

Faculty and graduate student colloquia

**"David Reubeni's Diary: A Sixteenth-
Century Black Jewish Messiah's
Guide to Saving the Jewish People"**
Monday, January 22, 2024

Alan Verskin, Professor and
Samuel J. Zacks Chair of Jewish History,
University of Toronto

**"Is Zionism Settler-Colonialism?
The Pre- and Post-10/7 Discourse
on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
in Academia and Activism"**
Thursday, February 22, 2024

Arnon Degani, Visiting Professor,
Lehigh University

**"Matalotaje del anima': Translation as
Spiritual Resistance in the Writings of
Luis de Carvajal/Joseph Lumbroso"**
Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ronnie Perelis, Yeshiva University

*Co-sponsored with the Department of
Spanish and Portuguese*

**"Song-Speech-Silence: On the History
of Reading in Ashkenaz"**
Friday, March 29, 2024

Oren Cohen Roman, University of Haifa,
University of Pennsylvania

**Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster
Symposium**
Wednesday, April 17, 2024

The Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster held its second annual symposium, at which five PhD students from three different departments presented their latest research to an audience of their peers and Crown Center faculty.

**"Landscapes of Print: Jews, Arabs, and
Judeo-Arabic in Colonial North Africa"**
Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Noam Sienna, Postdoctoral Fellow,
University of Toronto

*Co-sponsored with the Department
of Religious Studies*

Co-sponsored events

**The Vints Hans Lied – Yiddish Song
in the 17th Century Frankfurter
Judengasse**
March 21, 2024

Presented by the Vagantes Conference on Medieval Studies at Northwestern University and The Newberry Consort, this program centered around the extraordinary Vints Hans Lied, a Yiddish historical song chronicling the events of the Fettmilch Uprising in Frankfurt am Main in 1614.

"The Twilight of Democracy"
Anne Applebaum
May 8, 2024

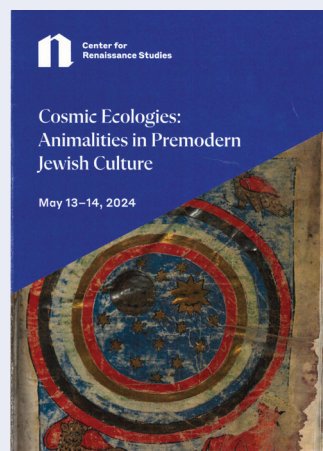
Pulitzer Prize-winning historian,
journalist and commentator on
geopolitics

*Sponsored by the Buffett Institute for
Global Affairs*

Cosmic Ecologies Conference
May 13-14, 2024

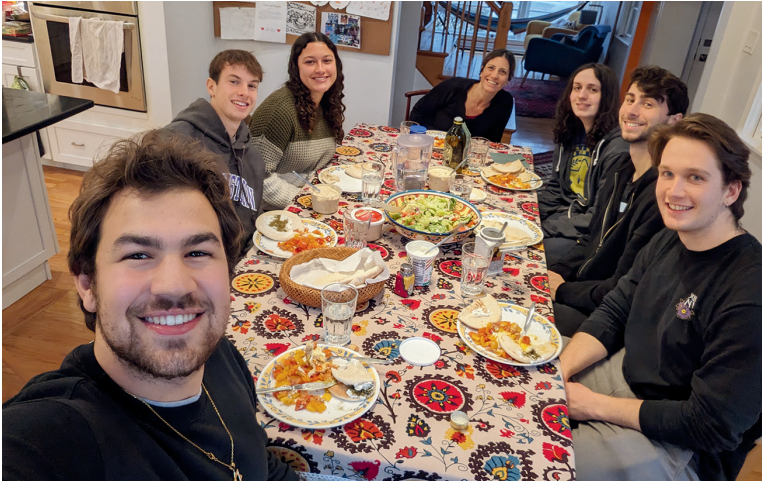
This symposium focused on the meaning and symbolism of the natural world in medieval Jewish art, literature, and theology. Seventeen leading scholars from the United States, Europe, and Israel met over the course of two days on the Northwestern campus and at the Newberry Library, and shared new findings drawn from their scholarship.

*Co-sponsored with Case Western Reserve
University and the Newberry Library*



UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

2023-2024 Undergraduate Courses



“ In my fall quarter third-year Hebrew Class titled “Fun Stuff,” we focused on topics of leisure time and volunteering while learning and practicing new and expanded grammar structures and vocabulary. Towards the end of the quarter, we met at my house where we cooked Israeli dishes (such as shakshuka, Israeli salad, and bourkas) following recipes in Hebrew. When the food was ready, we sat to eat it together.”

Hanna Tzucker Seltzer

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



Author Sayed Kashua visited with undergraduate students in the course “Between Two Writers: Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret” taught by Professor Hanna Seltzer. Students who had learned about Kashua’s books, television shows and movies, prepared questions and conversed with him in Hebrew.



Donuts at the Rock with students Madeleine Stern and Emma DeRose

- Hebrew I
- Hebrew II
- Hebrew III: Hebrew Language and Culture
- Hebrew III: Between Two Writers: Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret
- Hebrew III: The Four-Dimensional Jerusalem
- Hebrew IV: Advanced Topics in Hebrew Literature
- Holocaust Memory
- Jewish History, 750-1492
- Jewish Refugees in the 20th Century
- History of the Holocaust
- What is Antisemitism?
- Holocaust Trials
- Jewish Autobiography
- Daily Life in Israel/Palestine
- Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Images of the Shtetl
- It’s Complicated: Love Stories in Israeli Literature and Israeli Culture
- Leisure and Popular Culture in 20th Century Palestine/Israel
- The Formation of Sephardic Diaspora and Culture, 1400-1800
- We’re Here, We’re Queer: Queer Narratives in Israeli Literature and Culture
- The Holocaust and Its Memory in Israel
- The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Competing Narratives
- Otherness and Othering in Israeli Film
- Yiddish, Our Setting Sun: Yiddish Literature and Culture in the 20th Century
- Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel
- MENA Jewry: History, Society, Culture
- Water in Arid Lands: Israel and the Middle East
- Holocaust Education Design
- The Holocaust: Psychological Themes and Perspectives
- Introduction to Hebrew Bible
- Religion and Literature
- Introduction to Judaism: Jewish Texts
- Magic, Monsters, and the Holocaust
- Trauma and Atrocity: Holocaust Memory, Memorials and Museums
- Spanish Inquisitions: Crypto-Jews and other Christians in Iberia and America, 1400 - 1700

Undergraduate Student News

CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATING JEWISH STUDIES MAJOR MONICA HADDAD



“ My introduction to the department was when I started taking Hebrew my freshman year as well as a class on Israel and Palestine with Sara Hirschhorn. Hebrew with Hanna Tzucker Seltzer and Ronit Alexander was such an amazing and positive experience

that I decided to continue on with Hebrew language study and eventually decided to pick up the major. An independent research study with Maayan Hilel and courses in the Department of Religious Studies granted me the ability find the interdisciplinary education I was looking for, intersecting my passion for language learning with my desire to learn more about why conversations surrounding the Levant were so polarizing and my desire to explore my Arab heritage. The department allowed me to find my passion for learning Semitic languages and understand the culture, history, and discourse in the Middle East. Now post-graduation, I am currently doing stem cell transplant research and am continuing to practice Hebrew and improve my Arabic, as I know that whatever I do in the future will involve my knowledge of those two languages as a means of understanding others and facilitating discussions as well as international development.”

JILL STACEY HARRIS PRIZE IN JEWISH STUDIES



This year's Jill Stacey Harris Prize in Jewish Studies was awarded to **Emma DeRose**. DeRose submitted her paper, "Red Sacrifice: An Examination of the 'Soviet-Jewish Imagination' in Isaac Babel's 'My First Goose'" for Professor Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern's course "Jews in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia."

The selection committee was unanimous in finding DeRose's paper to be not only remarkably well-written and exhaustively researched, but also insightful, original, and historically nuanced. It was exceptional for integrating and threading several different fields: Russian and Slavic studies, Jewish religious traditions, East European history, memory studies, and gender studies. Her argument was well streamlined, importantly and ingeniously also pointing to the significance of studying the suppression of memory about Judaism among socialist-minded Jews.

The Jill Stacey Harris Prize in Jewish Studies has been awarded annually since 1991 for the best undergraduate essay in the field of Jewish Studies. Student papers are nominated by the faculty in Jewish Studies, and an independent committee evaluates and judges the nominated submissions.

“ Researching "Red Sacrifice" was a blast. It incorporated all of the subjects and questions I found interesting and poignant. I got to study tractates of Talmud and halakhic digests, annotate and inhabit the blood-soaked, incense-scented hamlets of Isaac Babel's Russo-Ukrainian borderlands, and ask meaningful questions about Jewishness, liminal identities, and memory that helped me to understand the broader experiences of the Jewish diaspora. I'm extremely grateful to have had help from Professor Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern and Professor Barry Wimpfheimer on answering some of these questions. And I'm honored that, as a Catholic, my paper was found by the committee to be an insightful contribution to the field of Jewish Studies.”

Graduate Student News

GABRIEL BEN-JACOB (History)

completed his second year of his PhD. His research interests broadly cover American Judaism, Jewish nationalism and identity, the Reform movement, and the relationship between Jewish and Christian political and religious thought. He recently completed a research project about American Jewish perceptions of Palestine/the Land of Israel during the mid-19th century. In April, he also presented his first conference paper for the Queen Mary University of London Exchange Symposium sponsored by the Chabraja Center for Historical Studies and participated in the annual Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium.

LIZA BERNSTEIN (Religious Studies)

finished her fourth year of her PhD. She successfully defended her dissertation prospectus, "Niddah as Lived Religion: Ritual as a Site of Identity Contestation." After defending the proposal, she received IRB approval for her research and began her ethnographic study of contemporary niddah practice. In the winter, she presented a paper on the Talmudic evolution of the *mamzer* at the Association for Jewish Studies conference. She looks forward to continuing to work on her dissertation and dovetailing academic Talmud with contemporary ritual.

SAVOY CURRY (History)

completed her fifth year of her PhD. Her dissertation project examines interfaith sexual relationships in 14th-15th century German-speaking lands, through which she explores late-medieval gendered power dynamics that fluctuated based on class and religion. She analyzes how the sexual behaviors of Jewish women and Christian women, as well as those of Jewish men and Christian men, were treated differently within municipal, social, and religious contexts. Her dissertation illustrates that the treatment of interfaith sexual relationships often preceded and acted as a herald to the intense criminalization of sexual misbehavior, which occurred at a local level across Europe during the mid-

to-late-15th century. In addition to working on her dissertation, she delivered a number of conference papers this past year, including "Sexual Violence and Jewish Men in Christian Legal Sources" (presented at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference), "Priests, Christians, and Jews: Examining Sexual Contact across Religious Boundaries in Late Medieval German Lands" (presented at the German Historical Institute of London), and "Prostitution and Jewish Law in the Christian Courts: A Case from Fifteenth-Century Geneva" (presented at the European Association for Jewish Studies Conference). She spent the majority of this past year at Hebrew University as a visiting research fellow, where she is a member of the project, "Contending with Crises in the Fourteenth Century," under the supervision of Elisheva Baumgarten. She will continue her work with this group next year, through the generous support of the Crown Graduate Fellowship in Jewish Studies.

EMMA DAVIS (Political Science)

finished her fourth year of her PhD. In 2023, she received a Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship to pursue research for her dissertation in Israel. For most of 2024, she will be a visiting researcher at Tel Aviv University and will conduct archival research in the National Library of Israel.

PAUL FELLER (Musicology) published his first peer-reviewed article, "'Hoy al Portal ha venido': Nativity scenes and the Galant style in the Christmas villancicos of the Cathedral of Santiago, Chile (c.1770 - 1820)" in *Diagonal: An Ibero-American Music Review*. He secured a contract with A-R Editions' "Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era" to publish a critical edition titled "Villancicos from the Maya Highlands." He also began a lecturer position at DePaul University, teaching the music history survey course. He received several fellowships, grants, and prizes, including the Rolf und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung from the Herzog August

Bibliothek, the Fritz Halbers Fellowship Award from the Leo Baeck Institute, the Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship from The Renaissance Society of America, the J. Merrill Knapp Fellowship from the American Handel Society, the Handel Institute Research Award, and the International Research Travel Award from the Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs.

ARNE HOLVERSCHEID (Political Science) defended his prospectus in March 2024 and is currently working on implementing his proposed research on the normalization of far-right politics in Europe.

DANYLO LESHCHYSHYN (History)

completed the first year of his PhD as a Mellon Cluster Fellow in Jewish Studies. He specializes in the history of interethnic relations in Ukraine in the early-to-mid 20th century, with particular focus on the interplay between different manifestations of nationalism. In February, he had the opportunity to present on the wartime relations between the Waffen-SS "Galicia" Division and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army at the International Graduate Student Symposium in Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto. He also presented a paper at the Second Annual Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium on the fourth Hasidic Rebbe of Belz and the challenges in researching the history of "Righteous Among the Nations" in Ukraine. This article earned him an honorable mention in the 2024 Canadian Association of Slavists Graduate Essay Prize Competition. In March, he was accepted into the Chicago chapter of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, the premier scholarly association for Ukrainian Studies.

NOAH MARCUS (Theatre and Drama)

completed his second year of his PhD. This past year he also submitted his dissertation prospectus, which has been approved for study. This upcoming year, he will study for his qualifying exams. He had the honor of participating in the Second Annual Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium, where he presented a draft of his dissertation prospectus and received insightful and beneficial feedback.

ANASTASIYA NOVATORSKAYA

(History) specializes in Eastern Europe's history in the first half of the 20th century. Her dissertation, tentatively titled "The Unheard Voices of the Invisible Architects," reassesses the heretofore marginalized agents—women in the late 19th to the first half of the 20th century who navigated predominantly male-dominated intellectual and social spheres—by moving them from the margins to the forefront of the study of nationalism. Her research delves into how the intimate partners (wives, girlfriends, and mistresses) of famed radical nationalist leaders either rallied women in support of nationalism or provided the basis for the movement's ideology. Through the application of intellectual, political, and gender history, her project demonstrates the complex ways in which gender dynamics operate within Austrian, Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian political movements.

IDIL OZKAN'S (Anthropology) work researches legal anthropology, reparations, political economy of language, and citizenship and migration studies. Her research centers on Spain's and Portugal's reparation laws that extended citizenship to Sephardic Jews. While analyzing how Sephardic Jews in Turkey navigate nostalgia and belonging across Spain, Portugal, and Turkey, her dissertation also sheds light on contemporary cultural dynamics of ethnoreligious differentiation and Jewish-Muslim relations in Turkey. As the 2023-2024 Crown Graduate Fellow in Jewish Studies, she has completed three chapters of her dissertation tentatively titled "Curating Ancestry: Tracing Family Roots, Reparations, and Language Ideologies among Sephardic Jews." She also presented her work in international conferences such as American Ethnological Society Annual Meeting. Set to defend her dissertation in the spring of 2025, she has a fellowship through the 2024-2025 academic year.

BOGDAN PAVLISH (History) defended his dissertation "Nothing Exotic but Ourselves: Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Armenian Diaspora of Poland-Lithuania in the Seventeenth Century" in July. He received the 2024-25 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellowship in Armenian History at the University of Michigan.

MOLLY SCHIFFER (Political Science) is working on research concerning behavioral, historical, and theoretical approaches to understanding Jewish American identity politics. In the upcoming academic year, she will serve as a research assistant at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern and will continue to write her dissertation prospectus.

ANASTASIIA SIMFEROVSKA (Slavic Languages and Literatures) served as a graduate assistant during the 2023-24 academic year for the Holocaust Educational Foundation (HEFNU). As part of her work, she wrote Holocaust researchers' profiles for HEFNU's bi-annual newsletters and conducted interviews with scholars in the field. She translated from Polish into Ukrainian selected chapters of a Holocaust memoir *Light in Darkness* (1975) by Ignacy Chiger. The translations, followed by her analytical preface and a literary commentary on Chiger's memoir, were published in the 2023 issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Holocaust Studies: Ukrainian Focus*. In spring 2024, she received the Kurt and Thea Sonnenmark Memorial Fellowship at the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC). In June-July 2024, she joined a cohort of Northwestern PhD candidates in the Kellogg School of Management's Management for PhDs certificate program.

REBECCA TURNER (Theatre and Drama) completed her first year of coursework. Her research interests focus on Yiddish women dramatists from the 19th to 20th centuries with the goal of documenting, understanding, and uplifting their writings. In addition to her coursework, she had the honor of participating in 2024 Farbindungen Yiddish Studies Conference, Shtumer alef: Beginnings, Silences, Partnerships, and the Second Annual Jewish Studies Cluster Symposium.

KALIA VOGELMAN-NATAN (Media, Technology and Society) successfully defended her dissertation prospectus, tentatively titled "The YouTube Generation: How Young Children are Experiencing Online Video Consumption." Earlier this academic year, she completed an interdisciplinary (MTS/Religious Studies) qualifying exam on the intersections of religion, media, and children's culture.

ARIEL WEINER (Comparative Literary Studies & German) completed the seventh year of her PhD and is a Mellon Cluster Fellow in Jewish Studies. Her dissertation concerns the relationship between technical and religious mediation in the German Jewish discourses of the Weimar Period—particularly in the works of Martin Buber, Siegfried Kracauer, and Walter Benjamin. She spent the 2023-24 academic year at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry in Berlin on a one-year DAAD Research Fellowship. She has continued to work on her dissertation while undertaking research at the Walter Benjamin Archive in Berlin and the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach.

CROWN GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

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

Savoy Curry, a doctoral candidate in History, is the 2024-2025 recipient.



Curry's dissertation seeks to reconstruct civic and religious efforts to police boundaries between Christian and Jewish communities in urban settings in late medieval Ashkenaz, primarily through the regulation and criminalization of interfaith sexual relationships. Delving into the specifics of various court cases, myths, and stories that deal with real and imagined sexual transgressions, the dissertation unravels layers of class, religion, and gender, illustrating a criminalization process that rearranged hierarchies of power and increasingly focused on the sexual misconduct of women.

Utilizing Christian and Hebrew sources from 14th-15th century German-speaking lands, Curry first investigates the criminalization of sexual relationships at a local level. Mapping out a series of case studies, Curry demonstrates how the courts punished Christian

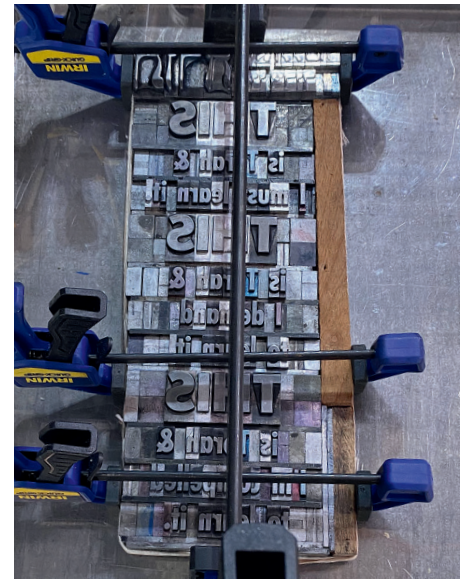
women and Jewish men for their sexual transgressions, largely through heavy fines and expulsions. The case studies unsettle assumptions about medieval hierarchies of religion and gender, illustrating situations in which wealth and masculinity might outweigh Jewish identity, and vice versa. Curry then explores medieval literary tropes, which fixated on the inverse relationship between Christian men and Jewish women. These tropes purposefully attempted to discourage sexual transgressions, while simultaneously affirming existing hierarchies of power. Curry ultimately puts both types of relationships in conversation with the history of sex work, positing that anxieties about interfaith sexual relationships contributed to the later criminalization of other illicit sexual behavior.

Mapping out a series of case studies, Curry demonstrates how the courts punished Christian women and Jewish men for their sexual transgressions, largely through heavy fines and expulsions.

STUDENTS LEARN FROM JEWISH TEXTS— AND CREATE THEIR OWN



Shira Schwartz



Letterpress at Lark Sparrow Press

In spring 2024, Professor Shira Schwartz taught a new version of “Introduction to Judaism: Jewish Texts,” in which students were introduced to Jewishness by studying its texts and by participating in its textual practices.

Students learned to study Jewish texts in partnership (*havruta*) and tried their hands at various forms of embodied Jewish textual interpretation. Students had several opportunities to directly experience the production of Jewish texts. For instance, the class made several visits to the Northwestern Library’s Special Collections to work with rare Jewish texts and to learn about the impact of their materiality on reading.

The course culminated in a visit from visiting scholar-scribe-artist Noam Sienna, who taught students how to scribe their very own “shin,” a letter that represents God’s name on various Jewish ritual objects. Sienna’s visit led to a special letterpress project facilitated in partnership with Craig Jobson of Lark Sparrow Press.

This partnership was inspired by Schwartz’s desire to engage students not only in the collaborative learning of Jewish texts but in their collaborative production, by participating in the experience of making their very own “Torah.” Each member of the class produced a unique broadside letterpress poster inspired by a page of Talmud, using recovered Yiddish-Hebrew letter blocks that were created in Chicago but that had not been used in nearly 100 years. Students learned about the history and practices of printing and letterpress from Jobson and Sienna, with Jobson helping students to discover their “Torah”—the thing that moves them and that they cannot live without.



Craig Jobson and students

On the final day of class, students used their own broadsides to express their cumulative reflection on what they had learned, filling in the commentary with teachings and “Torah” that they would quite literally take with them from class and from each other, swapping posters to make their mark on one another visible and material. This finishing touch completed their text, concretized their learning and relationships, and will hopefully continue to inspire their learning about the role of relationship in Jewish texts and teachings.



Noam Sienna

Each member of the class produced a unique broadside letterpress poster inspired by a page of Talmud, using recovered Yiddish-Hebrew letter blocks that were created in Chicago but that had not been used in nearly 100 years.

RESPONSES TO ISRAEL-GAZA WAR MODEL ACADEMIC RIGOR AND INTELLECTUAL OPENNESS

In the aftermath of the October 7 Hamas attacks in Israel, and the ensuing war in Gaza, Northwestern's campus was the site of vigorous and often contentious discourse and debate. Students and faculty engaged in vigils, protests, counter-protests, and eventually an encampment to express their political views and seek solidarity with like-minded partners. But in the tumult of this robust—and sometimes very inflammatory—activism, there was the risk that the Northwestern community might lose sight of the university's overarching academic mission: careful and sophisticated academic teaching and scholarship.

A university like Northwestern has both the resources and responsibility to educate our community about the historical and political dimensions of an exceptionally complex and contested regional and geopolitical conflict.

This was where the Crown Family Center stepped into the breach. Our faculty focused our efforts on two overlapping goals. The first was educating students about the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its implications for understanding Jewish history and identity. Shortly after the events of October 7, the Crown Center hosted a "Teach-In" aimed at students with limited background knowledge, which provided an introductory-level overview of the history, politics, and culture of Israel as they pertained to the Hamas attack and its aftermath. The event attracted a curious and diverse student audience who were able to ask basic questions about a region of the world that was largely unfamiliar to them.

By the spring quarter, together with colleagues in the Middle East and North African Studies Program and the Buffet Center, we were able to assemble a roster of visiting experts who took the discussion to the next level. Seven renowned scholars spoke about various dimensions of the history of the conflict, focusing on the lead-up to the events of 1948 and 1967. The sessions provided deep-dives on the roles of antisemitism, Zionism, and Palestinian nationalism in shaping Israeli and Palestinian history and politics. The seven sessions drew a robust audience and constituted almost a complete quarter-length course in and of themselves.



Awad Halabi



Wendy Pearlman and David Shyovitz

The speakers at this series came from diverse personal and academic backgrounds, in keeping with the second broad goal of our academic programming: modeling the importance of learning about and carefully considering a range of conflicting perspectives on a fraught and complicated topic. Terms like antisemitism, settler colonialism, apartheid, even Zionism have been hotly debated among activists and academics alike, and these debates often generate more heat than light.

Our series exposed students to perspectives drawn from the fields of Jewish Studies, Israel Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and Palestinian Studies—representatives of which each have their own distinctive sets of methods and assumptions. No one who attended all seven sessions was likely to agree with every point that they heard—but no one who attended attempted to shout down a view with which they differed, and everyone was able to stretch their intellectual horizons to consider perspectives with which they may have disagreed. Perhaps this changed their minds about the underlying issues—or, just as importantly, perhaps it helped entrench their own personal political views, but now on the basis of deep knowledge rather than assumptions or intuitions alone.

The same values of intellectual curiosity and openness to considering conflicting viewpoints animated a session called “Difficult Conversations about Israel and Palestine,” a public dialogue between Professors David Shyovitz (Crown) and Wendy Pearlman (MENA). Shyovitz and Pearlman presented their personal and academic perspectives on the war to one another and to a sizable audience—not as a debate, or even with the goal of convincing anyone, but simply to model the ability of academics to hear and sit with different views.

It seems likely that debates over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will remain with us for the foreseeable future. We will continue to teach and study these difficult issues, drawing both upon sophisticated academic methods as well as a spirit of intellectual curiosity, empathy, and grace.

The speakers at this series came from diverse personal and academic backgrounds, in keeping with the second broad goal of our academic programming: modeling the importance of learning about and carefully considering a range of conflicting perspectives on a fraught and complicated topic.



Arie Dubnov



Elizabeth F. Thompson

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

This year, Alexander taught first- and second-year Hebrew classes, focusing on language skills and helping students navigate language, culture, and identity during a tumultuous period. As one of two webmasters for the Council on Language Instruction at Northwestern, she collaborated with colleagues from various language departments to enhance information on the council's events and about its members. Alexander also delivered two lectures to Hebrew teachers from around the world about integrating AI tools in the classroom and is actively exploring innovative methods to improve teaching and assessment with technological advancements. In addition, Alexander continues her journey toward a doctorate in modern languages.

YONI BRACK, Assistant Professor in the Department of History

Brack joined Northwestern and the Crown Family Center this year, relocating with his wife and two children from Tel Aviv to Chicago. His research explores medieval and early modern Iran, the Mongol Empire, and inter-religious relations between Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and Inner Asian traditions. His book, *An Afterlife for the Khan: Muslims, Buddhists, and Sacred Kingship in Mongol Iran and Eurasia*, was published in May 2023 (University of California Press). A co-authored article on plague in medieval Baghdad was published in *Medical History*. He also authored a short op-ed on the visual representations of the Prophet Muhammad in medieval Iran. Brack is currently working on a new book project, examining the intricate representations of Jews, Judaism, and the Torah in religious polemics and histories in pre-modern Persianate Muslim courts.

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

Cohen continued to take his "Unsilece" Holocaust teacher trainings and youth workshops on the road to a number of new schools, communities, and audiences, including teachers at Chiaravalle Montessori School in Evanston; teachers from across Ontario, Canada, through Liberation75; teachers and high school students across Tulsa, Oklahoma; educators affiliated with the Alabama Holocaust Education Center; students and teachers at New Trier, Highland Park, and Deerfield high schools, Illinois; communities affiliated with the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center in Milwaukee; high school students at St. Joseph's Academy in St. Louis, Missouri; middle school students and teachers at the Donna Klein Jewish Academy in Palm Beach County, Florida; teachers and informal educators training with the Museum of Holocaust and History Education at Kennesaw State University and the Breman Museum in Georgia. In the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern, Cohen continued to teach his courses on Holocaust museum and memorial design, Holocaust pedagogy and marginalized memories, and Holocaust film and fiction as vehicles for social change.

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

Cushman continued her role leading HEFNU. Her book in progress, *Women in Auschwitz*, is under contract with Indiana University Press. HEFNU hosted the second European Lessons & Legacies Conference in Prague in November 2023. In December 2023, Cushman organized a roundtable on "Queer and Trans Approaches to Teaching about the Holocaust" at the Association of Jewish Studies Conference in San Francisco. The American Historical Association also held their conference in San Francisco in January 2024. Cushman organized a roundtable about how teachers might bridge the gap between what scholars know and what teachers teach at the secondary and university levels. She also served as commentator for

a panel of papers on "Rethinking Holocaust Historiographies." Her work co-editing, with Joanne Pettitt and Dominic Williams, the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook on Auschwitz-Birkenau* (2025) continues. She contributed a chapter on women affiliated with the camp SS. She also began service as co-editor-in-chief of *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*.

GUY EHRLICH, Postdoctoral Fellow in Israel Studies

In 2023-2024, Ehrlich began his second year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Crown Center. As part of the fellowship, he taught two courses on Hebrew literature and Israeli culture: "It's Complicated: Love Stories in Hebrew Literature" and "We're Here, We're Queer: Queer Narratives in Hebrew Literature and Culture." His book, *The Empty Places of Yehudit Hendel*, which focuses on the works of Israeli writer Yehudit Hendel (1921-2014), is forthcoming with Haifa University Press. Two of his articles, which engage with Hebrew literature and queer theory, are forthcoming in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* and in a special collection of essays titled *Queer Kinship and Comparative Literature* (published by Palgrave Macmillan). During the past year, he also served as an adviser for an undergraduate student whose research project, focusing on the first Jewish hospital in Chicago, received the Undergraduate Research Grant.

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

In the last year, two of Fenves' books were translated into Spanish: *La reducción mesiánica: Walter Benjamin y la forma del tiempo* (Santiago, 2023), trans. Mauricio Oportus; and *Kant Tardío: Hacia otra ley de la tierra* (Buenos Aires, 2024), trans. Victor Ibarra and Rudy Pradenas. He also co-edited a volume (in German) containing the philosophical writings of Felix Noeggerath, an enigmatic scholar working in the sphere of neo-Kantianism whom Walter Benjamin dubbed "the universal genius." Essays by Fenves appeared in a variety of scholarly journals as well as public venues, including *boundary2* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

BENJAMIN FROMMER, Associate Professor in the Department of History

This past year, Frommer continued to serve as the faculty director of the Jewish Studies Graduate Cluster. Together with the student co-leaders, he organized the second annual cluster symposium, where five graduate students presented on their latest research. For academic year 2023-2024, Frommer also served as the interim director of the Nicholas D. Chabraja Center for Historical Studies. In November 2023, he delivered the keynote lecture of the international Lessons and Legacies of the Holocaust Conference in Prague. Back at Northwestern, Frommer's courses included an advanced research seminar focused on trials of Holocaust perpetrators and an introductory lecture on the global history of prisons and camps.

MAAYAN HILEL, Assistant Professor of Instruction and Assistant Director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies

Hilel served this past year as the Jewish Studies assistant director as well as the director of undergraduate studies. In winter and spring 2024, she added two new courses to her roster: "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Competing Narratives" and "MENA Jewry: History, Society, Culture." Together with the Crown Center's director, Hilel organized and mediated several events for the general public, such as "Sayed Kashua on Humor, Hope, and Hopelessness" and "Israel's Black Panthers." Hilel was one of the initiators and organizers of the Israel and Palestine Joint Speaker Series, collaborating with the MENA program and the Buffett Institute. She also presented the concluding lecture in the series: "Post-1948 Transformations II: Arab-Jews Before & After Israeli Statehood." Hilel also participated in a "Teach-In: Israel-Hamas War" held at Northwestern. With respect to her scholarly work, she made further progress on her book project, *Leisure, Pleasure, and Fun in Mandatory Palestine*, while completing an article for the *Palestine/Israel Review*.



PROFESSOR LUCILLE KERR retired in 2024 after 25 years as a distinguished member of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. An affiliate of the Crown Family Center, Professor Kerr taught courses including "Latin American Jewish Literature," "Discovering Jewish Latin America," and "Exploring Jewish Argentina: From Jewish Gauchos to Contemporary Culture." She was also a guiding force behind the Sava Ranisavljevic Fellowship, which funded Judeo-Spanish Studies scholarship at NU. We will miss her and wish her well in her next chapter!

ȘTEFAN CRISTIAN IONESCU,

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

Ionescu taught three new Northwestern courses: "Jewish Refugees in Twentieth Century Europe," (winter 2024), "Colonialism and Genocide: Twentieth Century Europe and Africa" (fall 2023), and "Holocaust Memory" (fall 2023). During the last academic year, Ionescu finished the revisions and the proofs of his book project examining the restitution of Jewish property in post-Holocaust Romania that will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2024 as *Justice and Restitution in Post-Nazi Romania: Rebuilding Jewish Lives and Communities, 1944-1950*. During the 2023-2024 academic year, he also published two journal articles titled "Aryanization Bureaucrats in Post-Holocaust Romania," *Rechtsgeschichte - Legal History* (2023), and "Politics of Holocaust Memory in Communist and Post-Communist Romania: On Jewish Communist Survivor Matei Gall's Multiple Life Stories," co-author: Dana Mihailescu (University of Bucharest), *Yad Vashem Studies* (2023). In fall of 2024, Ionescu will be an associate professor in the Department of History at Chapman University.

JACOB LASSNER, Professor Emeritus

Lassner published a review article dealing with Jews and the Qur'an in the journal *Bustan*. He also lectured at the University of Bern, Switzerland on Jewish-Muslim relations and at Brandeis University on the formation of Muslim attitudes towards the Jews and Judaism.

PHYLLIS LASSNER, Professor of Instruction Emerita

Lassner published the essay "Mythic History, Conspiracy, and Memory of World War II in Jo Nesbo's Fiction" in the collection *Rewriting War in Contemporary Literature and Culture* and "Past Life: A Cantata for Holocaust Voices Past and Present" in the *Routledge International Handbook of Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Descendants of Holocaust Survivors*. She was an invited speaker at the University of Bern, Switzerland symposium on Antisemitism: History and Culture and at the Illinois Holocaust Museum inaugural event for the Kindertransport exhibit. She also delivered the Holocaust Education Foundation winter lecture on "The Art of Betrayal: French Holocaust Film, Art Collecting, and the Mystery of French Jewish Identity."

SHMULIK NILI, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science

Nili's third book, *Philosophizing the Indefensible*, appeared with Oxford University in October 2023. His fourth book, *Beyond the Law's Reach*, was published by Oxford in September 2024. During the last year, funding from the Crown Family Center enabled Nili to visit the University of Haifa, where he presented research on conscription in emergency circumstances. With the same university, Nili has also been at work on a "co-existence initiative," meant to bring both Jewish and Arab Israeli students to the Northwestern campus, with the aim of having the students live together and enroll together in different Northwestern courses in political science, philosophy, and economics.

ANNA PARKINSON, Associate Professor in the Department of German

At the invitation of the Department of German at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Parkinson delivered the 2023 Annual Grilk Lecture, titled “Contrapuntal Humanism: Anachronism in Post-Holocaust Diasporic Writing.” In 2024, she gave an invited lecture at the Center for Medicine, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (affiliate of Cedars-Sinai’s Program in the History of Medicine), and was invited to participate in the conference “Hope and Possibility: German Studies and the Critical Imagination” at Cornell University, the Seventh Biennial German Jewish Studies Workshop at the University of Notre Dame, and the German Studies Association of Australia International Conference, University of Sydney. Her essay, “Revisiting the ‘Talking Cure,’” was published in the 2024 *Yearbook for European Studies*, titled *Childhood During War and Genocide*. Closer to home, she introduced Kathy Reichs, forensic anthropologist, bestselling literary author, and television producer, at the 2023 Northwestern Alumnae Award ceremony. In 2024, she introduced Professor Phyllis Lassner, who delivered the inaugural Holocaust Education Foundation at Northwestern University (HEFNU) Winter Lecture on the topic of French Holocaust film and the history of art collecting. Parkinson was also elected to the advisory board of the American Friends of Marbach, an association of German Studies scholars that works collaboratively with the German Literary Archive in Marbach, Germany on academic events and graduate student outreach.

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

In 2023-24, Petrovsky-Shtern presented at conferences at Bar-Ilan University, University of Chernivtsi, Chortkiv City Council, and University of Singapore (on Zoom) and at New York Shevchenko Scientific Society and Northwestern School of Law (in person).

He published a chapter on Haim Vital’s *Book of Dreams* and Russian censorship in the book *Besmirching the Denominational Enemy Within and Outside: Counter-history or Its Parody* (2024), which he co-edited with Ephraim Nissan from University College London. He also published an introduction to and a chapter in the book *After Soviet State Antisemitism: Emigration, Transformation, and the Re-Building of Jewish Life Since 1991* (2024), which he co-edited with Zeev Khanin from Bar-Ilan University. His conversation with Ana Medvedovska about the Israel/American TV sequel “Devil Among Us” on a much-contested Ivan Dem’ianuk Trial appeared in the Harvard/Kyiv journal *KRYTYKA*. As a scholar-artist who produces artwork that serves an extension of his scholarship, Petrovsky-Shtern gave a Distinguished Speakers presentation discussing his newest artwork at the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in Chicago.

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

In September 2023, RekheSS co-led a group of 16 undergraduate students on the fourth annual Global Engineering Trek to Israel, which focused on water in arid lands. The trek included special visits to start-up companies and the U.S. Embassy office in Tel Aviv. As director of IIP, RekheSS hosted guest speakers Tzipi Livni, former vice prime minister and foreign minister of Israel; Hussein Ibish, senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute; and Aaron David Miller, senior fellow at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, for the webinar “The Israel-Hamas War: Background & Implications” in November 2023. In February 2024, IIP hosted “Gaza: The Day After,” a webinar featuring Ehud Olmert, former prime minister of Israel. IIP, in collaboration with the Chicago Festival of Israeli Cinema, invited Barak Heymann, an award-winning Israeli filmmaker, to give a talk on “Israel Behind the Scenes,” in which Heymann discussed the many facets and challenges facing Israeli society. Alongside Professor Aaron Packman, RekheSS co-taught the course “Water in Arid Lands: Israel and the

Middle East.” They also co-hosted the Eighth Annual Symposium on Water in Israel and the Middle East, this year in collaboration with Current Water Innovation (Chicago). In July, RekheSS lectured on “Abu Yair”: Arab Support for Netanyahu and the Perception of Israeli Democracy” at the AIS - EALS Annual Conference in Prague. RekheSS continues working on a book with Itamar Rabinovich, former Israeli ambassador to the U.S., titled *Israel, Jewish and Democratic? Israel and its Palestinian Arab Citizens*.

SHIRA SCHWARTZ, Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies

Schwartz started a new collection of Jewish Artists’ Books in Northwestern Library’s Special Collections, consisting at this point of all women and non-binary Jewish artists. This collection creates a critical expansion of Jewish textuality and highlights the creativity of Jewish texts and their wonderful relationship with the artists’ books genre. Schwartz also collaborated with scholar-artist Noam Sienna and local letterpress printer Craig Jobson of Lark Sparrow Press on a unique “broadside” letterpress poster that highlights the materiality and personal interpretation of Torah, based on her translation of Berakhot 62a of the Babylonian Talmud. The final stage of the poster creation involved students from “Introduction to Judaism: Jewish Texts” and enabled them to participate in their own production and reception of Jewish texts.

DAVID SHYOVITZ, Associate Professor in the Department of History

In 2023-24, Shyovitz taught a first-year seminar on “The History of Heaven,” a course on Jewish History in the Middle Ages, and three sections of his course “What is Antisemitism?” (for undergraduates, doctoral students, and Northwestern alumni). He delivered invited lectures at Duke University and at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Western Michigan, and co-organized the conference “Cosmic Ecologies,” which was jointly hosted by Northwestern and the Newberry Library. In his capacity as director of the Crown Family Center, he shared political and historical perspectives on the Israel-Gaza war at numerous communal and academic institutions.

HANNA TZUKER SELTZER WINS THE COUNCIL ON LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION'S 2023-24 CLI EXCELLENCE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AWARD

Each year the Council on Language Instruction recognizes the accomplishments of a Northwestern faculty member with the Excellence in Language Teaching Award. Hanna Seltzer has been honored with the award this year. This is such a well-deserved honor, and a fitting recognition of the indefatigable work she has done over the years to grow the Hebrew language program.



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

Tzucker Seltzer created and taught two new classes: “Biblical Stories and Poems” for fourth-year Hebrew students and heritage speakers (in fall 2023) and “Yiddish, Our Setting Sun: Yiddish Literature and Culture in the 20th Century,” a Jewish Studies class taught in English (in spring 2024). In winter 2023, Tzucker Seltzer taught a class about the writing of Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret for third-year Hebrew students. Tzucker Seltzer invited Kashua, who visited the Northwestern campus to meet with her students, and they conversed with Kashua in Hebrew about his writing. In spring 2024, in her class for third-year Hebrew students about Jerusalem, Tzucker Seltzer hosted Tova Sheleg from the Jerusalemite organization Habayit Hameshutaf on Zoom. She also hosted Maya de Vries and Abir Dakwar, two Jerusalemite mothers who send their kids to the bilingual school (Hebrew-Arabic) in Jerusalem and who shared the challenges they face for their ideological choice. As a final assignment in the class, the students presented on projects of co-existence between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem. For the annual festival of languages at Northwestern, Tzucker Seltzer taught the Hebrew students in all three classes the song “Song for Peace,” and, along with her colleague Ronit Alexander, she performed

the song with them on stage. Prior to the performance, Tzucker Seltzer gave a presentation on the song’s meaning and its role in rallies for peace in Israel’s history.

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

Wimpfheimer spent the year on sabbatical, researching and writing a book on the Mishnah as a work of literature. He recently co-organized a conference (cosponsored by the Crown Center) in memory of his teacher Professor David Weiss Halivni at New York University. His essay, “What Is Happening in the Humanities? Theory, Politics, and Protest,” appeared in the summer 2024 issue of *Sources: A Journal of Jewish Ideas*.

IPEK KOCAOMER YOSMAOĞLU, Associate Professor in the Department of History

Yosmaoğlu continued to serve in her role as the director of the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program at the Buffett Institute and as the president of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association. She organized and hosted several events; the final one was the conference “‘Looking Turk-ish’: A Modern Identity Reframed” that took place on May 31-June 1 at the Buffett Institute. In May, she presented a paper titled “Olim and Muhacirin: Jewish Migration to the Ottoman Empire from the Treaty of Berlin to the Eve of WWI” at a workshop hosted by the Ohio State University’s Mershon Center.

SHAI ZAMIR, Sava Ranisavljevic Postdoctoral Fellow in Judeo-Spanish Studies

Zamir completed a new essay on crypto-Judaism in colonial Peru and another on Sephardi masculinity in the eastern Sephardi diaspora. Additionally, Northwestern’s support enabled him to organize two events aligned with his research and teaching agendas: a guest lecture by Professor Ronnie Perelis from Yeshiva University on the spirituality of New Christians of Jewish descent in 16th-century Mexico, and a talk by Professor Yannay Israeli from the University of Michigan on Jews who petitioned for royal justice in Castile just before the 1492 expulsion. The fellowship also provided Zamir with the invaluable opportunity to develop two new courses in medieval and early modern Jewish history. One course focused on the formation of the Sephardi diaspora between 1300-1700, while the other explored the history of the Inquisition, particularly the struggles and dilemmas faced by Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity and later persecuted by the Inquisition for attempting to observe their faith in secret. These courses addressed topics that remain underrepresented in U.S. academia, where much of the scholarship and pedagogy is dedicated to modern history or European Jewry. The course also taught students about Ladino or Judeo-Spanish, the language Jews in the Ottoman Empire spoke for hundreds of years; the students visited the library to see Haggadot in this language, and even got to sing a few Ladino songs.

NEW NORTHWESTERN LIBRARY JEWISH STUDIES ADDITIONS: THE HEBREW AND JEWISH ARTISTS' BOOKS COLLECTIONS



Books from the new Hebrew College collection

With 8.2 million print and electronic volumes across all its locations, Northwestern University's libraries are stacked with materials from a diverse selection of topics, genres, and authors.

Within the field of Jewish studies, this includes books about Judaism, the history of Jews, the history of Palestine and Israel, Hebrew, Yiddish literature, the Holocaust, Jewish philosophy, and the Bible. But recently, the library has focused on two new collections: a trove of newly donated Hebrew books, and a collection of newly commissioned Jewish artists' books.

"We're a major research library," said Jewish Studies subject librarian Geoffrey Morse. "I think it's crucial to have these important religious and cultural works in our collection so people can learn from them, so people can be exposed to them, so people can read and get the support they need for their research."

The new Hebrew collection was acquired by Northwestern in December 2022 with a donation of 3,000 books from Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts. Statistics and Jewish Studies senior Jonathan Mazor, who works as a metadata services aide, sorted through the books, assessed their condition, determined their rarity, and cataloged them. So far, nearly 1,000 of the donated books have been cataloged and are available for students and community members.

Mazor said the collection includes many modern books published since the late 1970s, but some books go back much further. For example, the donated books included a set of short stories written by famed Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem—one of which was nearly impossible to find (it was not held at the National Library of Israel, Tel Aviv University, or anywhere else in the United States). Another exciting find was a Hebrew translation of *The Mysteries of Paris*, a French novel about love, romance, and infidelity. The translation was published



A *Doctrine of Handyworks* by Lynne Avadenka (2022)

in the latter half of the 19th century and models Hebrew's shift from a religious language to a language used in daily life.



Jonathan Mazor

"This is one of the first books that reimagined the role of Hebrew as a language in terms of what types of topics and genres it could carry," Mazor said.

"For many generations, Jews had really only used Hebrew for religious texts, and to communicate with different Jewish communities—but never for something like this."

Most of the books in this collection are in Hebrew, but there are still some notable works in English, German, and Yiddish. One unique English piece was a cookbook created by a Massachusetts congregation in the 1970s. Each member contributed a family recipe, and they were put together in a plastic folder.

The library's second new collection is less than a year old: a series of new, custom-made Jewish artists' books. Jewish artists' books are a form of art where the book itself becomes the art practice and artwork. Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Shira Schwartz was inspired to start this collection last year after being tasked with teaching an Introduction to Judaism class.

Schwartz met with Jewish artists and got virtual studio tours to see their work. The Northwestern collection now features 11 titles from artists Lynne Avadenka, Jacqueline Nicholls, and Andi Arnovitz.

"Artists' books are very special as a genre and very unique and very rare, because there's a lot of labor put into them," Schwartz said. "And then the idea of a Jewish artists' book collection, I think, is even more unique and more rare, but incredibly rich and wonderful to bring these two genres together."

Of the many creative and standout texts in Northwestern's libraries, Schwartz gave Nicholls' *Book of Black Fire/White Fire* as an example. The book has hand imprints to make it clear that it's meant to be held and be with a body. Schwartz said this "highlights the relationship between body and book."

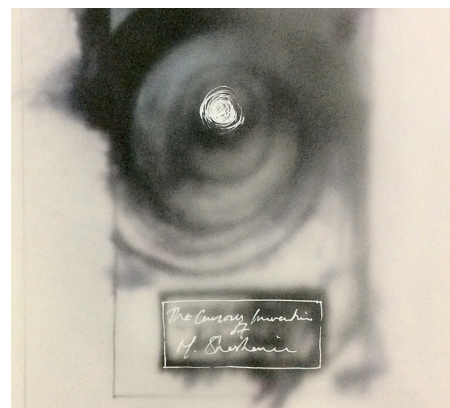
Because artists' books require a lot of labor, there are very few editions, and they are sold at high prices. They have niche audiences and can be considered "fine book art." They are typically only acquired by libraries, institutions, and collectors. Northwestern hopes to add more to its collection in future years.

"I think it's crucial to have these important religious and cultural works in our collection so people can learn from them, so people can be exposed to them, so people can read and get the support they need for their research."

Geoffrey Morse



Books from the new Hebrew College collection



The Curious Invention of M. Shoshani's Library by Jacqueline Nicholls (2019)

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