

# THE CROWN FAMILY CENTER FOR **JEWISH AND ISRAEL STUDIES**

2019-2020  
Annual Report



וְיָקֻם כִּסֵּה אֶת כְּסֵה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּדָרָה וְתִקַּח



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

The Rylands Haggadah, fol. 14: "The Healing of Moses' Leprous Arm" (top) and "The Return to Egypt, and Zipporah Circumcising her Son" (bottom). Catalonia, mid-14th century. The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester (Hebrew MS 6).

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Dear Friends:** In March of this year, as the potentially catastrophic reach of the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to come into focus, a succession of friends and acquaintances remarked—half-jokingly, half-anxiously—on the potential historical parallels. “So do you think we’re on the cusp of another Black Plague?” some asked. “How long before the Jews are accused of poisoning the wells?” Indeed, the pandemic arrived on the heels of a dramatic upsurge in anti-Semitic sentiment and violence worldwide, and some reactions to the crisis have veered into conspiracy theorizing with implicit or overt anti-Jewish resonances. “I bet you never thought we’d be reliving the ‘Dark Ages’ in the twenty-first century, eh?” Indeed not. While I am fascinated by the study of plague and persecution in the Jewish past, I never imagined having to apply my particular historical perspective so directly to the events of the present. Like everyone else trying to maintain some balance between their personal and professional lives as the two increasingly converged during quarantine, I would have much preferred to leave work at work.

The intervening months have shown that COVID—for all the devastation it has wrought around the world—is unlikely to reach the cataclysmic scale of medieval plagues. Still, in between teaching over Zoom, home-schooling my children, scavenging in vain for hand sanitizer, disinfecting my mail, and “doom-scrolling” through the latest news updates, I spent much of the spring and summer lockdown mulling over what lessons might be gleaned from the Jewish past that could provide insight—or even solace—during these ominous times.

Jewish thinkers, artists, and storytellers have frequently sought to understand illness through the lens of Scriptural precedents. In the Hebrew Bible, generalized “plague” (*magefah*, or sometimes *dever*) is understood to be a punishment that God dispenses when He grows displeased with the sins of humanity. But the specific illness that receives the most detailed attention in the Bible—and in subsequent Jewish interpretation—is *tsara’at*, a skin disease often translated as leprosy. The Bible devotes hundreds of verses to the etiology and treatment of *tsara’at*, and narrates the experiences of numerous biblical figures who were afflicted with the ailment—from supporting biblical characters like Naaman and Uzziah (II Kings) to major protagonists like Moses (Exodus) and his sister Miriam (Numbers). Subsequent readers of the Bible asserted that *tsara’at* was a punishment for those who had committed specific sins (most frequently *leshon ha-ra*, “evil speech”), but the biblical text itself never explicitly links the disease to any particular sin, or indeed, to sin at all. Instead, the text seems particularly concerned with the “social distancing” that a person stricken with *tsara’at* must undertake. Part of the elaborate purification ritual required to cleanse one of *tsara’at* involves a period of isolation from the community at large. In the Bible illness entails not just physical discomfort, but also, perhaps more significantly, a loss of one’s sense of community.

For the biblical Israelites wandering through the vast and threatening desert wilderness, forcible seclusion from family and friends must have been a desperately alienating experience. Over the past months, all of us have experienced some degree of this. At the Crown Center, our students and teachers abruptly transitioned from packed classrooms to the isolation of their own homes; faculty, students, and staff alike badly missed the camaraderie of our in-person intellectual community. We also felt isolated from our friends and partners in the broader Chicagoland area, especially once it became clear that the Center would have to cancel all our in-person public events for the remainder of the year.

But in the biblical account of *tsara'at*, alienation is followed by reintegration into the Israelite encampment. The cure for the disease is followed by—or perhaps even characterized by—the renewal of community bonds. Moses learns this lesson early in the Book of Exodus, when his hand is temporarily stricken with leprosy after he expresses doubts about his ability—as someone who had lived his life apart from the Children of Israel—to effectively represent them to Pharaoh. (This biblical vignette is depicted in our newsletter's cover image.) Moses's brief stint as a leper seems to lay his concerns to rest, and cements his self-image as the “faithful shepherd” who identifies with and works tirelessly on behalf of his people.

At the Crown Center, we've committed to following a similar path. In the face of the pandemic, it is all too easy to withdraw into isolation. But one lesson of the Jewish tradition is that now is precisely the time to reinvest in connection and community.

Over the course of the spring and summer, our faculty made determined efforts to master online teaching and to connect with our students—and the result was a substantial increase in the enrollment figures for our Jewish Studies and Israel Studies courses. While it is not yet clear when we will be able to gather on campus for public programming, we have planned an exciting array of online offerings for the 2020-21 year, which will provide our undergrads, graduate students, faculty, and community partners with access to innovative and engaging Jewish and Israel Studies programming. And in spite of the challenging circumstances, our faculty and students have continued to accomplish great things—as you'll see in our “Updates” sections, our members are publishing award winning books and articles, designing innovative new courses, and building bridges with colleagues and institutions in Israel and around the globe.

I encourage you to stay tuned via our mailing list, our website, or our Facebook page for more details about our upcoming activities, and I hope to connect with each of you online. (And, hopefully soon, in person!) In the meantime, wishing you a new academic and Jewish year of health, peace, and happiness.

David Shyovitz

David Shyovitz  
Director





## 2019-2020 EVENTS

### The Manfred H. Vogel Lecture in Judaic Studies

**“The Revival of the Jewish-Christian Debate in the 19th Century: Missionaries, Meshummadim, and Maskilim”**

David Ruderman, Joseph Meyerhoff  
Professor of Modern Jewish History,  
University of Pennsylvania

Professor David Ruderman delivered the 2019 Manfred H. Vogel Memorial Lecture on November 7, 2019. Ruderman analyzed the fascinating career of Alexander McCaul, an influential and prolific Christian evangelical missionary who traveled to Warsaw in the nineteenth century to missionize among the Jews of eastern Europe. Ruderman discussed McCaul’s polemical but also admiring attitude toward Hebrew and rabbinic literature, traced the careers of those who converted (*meshummadim*) under his direction, and demonstrated the lasting impact McCaul had upon the “enlightened” Jews (*maskilim*) who responded to McCaul and his work.

### “Israel Facing a New Middle East: Challenges and Responses”

Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, Israel’s  
former Ambassador to the United States  
and former Chief Negotiator with Syria

Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich addressed a full auditorium of community members and students on Northwestern’s campus on November 12, 2019, in his lecture “Israel Facing a New Middle East: Challenges and Responses.” During the lecture and subsequent Q&A session, Rabinovich tackled an impressive breadth of issues surrounding Israel and its position vis-à-vis other regional political power players. He also commented on the present turmoil within Israeli politics and the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories.



Itamar Rabinovich



David Ruderman



Michelle Campos

### Faculty and graduate student colloquia

**October 18, 2019**

**“Unmixing the Holy City:  
Coexistence and Segregation in  
Early 20th Century Jerusalem”**

Michelle Campos, Associate Professor  
of Modern Middle Eastern History,  
University of Florida

**October 23, 2019**

**“War and Peace of Iosif Trumpeldor:  
From Zionist Hagiography to  
Cultural History”**

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern,  
Crown Family Professor of Jewish  
Studies and Professor of History,  
Northwestern University

**December 4, 2019**

**“Yiddish Theatre and the  
Argentinean Avant-Gardes”**

C. Tova Markenson, PhD Candidate  
in Northwestern’s Interdisciplinary  
PhD in Theatre and Drama

**March 9, 2020**

**“The Rise and Fall of ‘the Jewish  
King’: Slovak Collaboration and  
Complicity During the Holocaust”**

Vanda Rajcan, PhD Candidate,  
Department of History,  
Northwestern University

## 2019-2020 COURSES



Tova Markenson



Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern and David Shyovitz

### Co-sponsored events

**October 31, 2019**

**“Entangled Memories: Hiroshima, Jerusalem, and the Emergence of Global Memory Culture”**

Ran Zwigenberg, Pennsylvania State University

*Sponsored by Department of Asian Languages and Cultures*

**November 11, 2019**

**“Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora”**

Devi Mays, University of Michigan

*Sponsored by Middle East and North African Studies Program*

**February 6, 2020**

**COJOT, Film Screening & Q&A with Writer, Director, and Producer Boaz Dvir**

*Sponsored by Holocaust Educational Foundation*



Jewish Studies courses at Northwestern cover such a wide variety of subject areas spanning from ancient to modern you really can't go wrong. If you are even a little interested in exploring Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish thinking, Jewish writers, etc. It's a really valuable resource for students and I would strongly encourage those who are interested to get involved. In addition to the courses and faculty, there are very cool events throughout the year. My time at NU was really, really enriched by my involvement with the Crown Family Center and also taking these Jewish Studies courses.”

Amanda Gordon, Medill 2020

**Hebrew I, II, III**

**Jewish History II: 1492-1789**

**Jewish History III: 1789-1948**

**Christians and Jews**

**Sects and Sectarrians in Jewish History**

**Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism**

**The Image of the Jew in Western Modernism**

**Origins of Zionism**

**Jewish Argentina: From Jewish Gauchos to Contemporary Culture**

**The Blood Libel**

**History of the Holocaust**

**Gender, Race, and the Holocaust**

**Holocaust Trials**

**Holocaust Memory, Memorials, and Museums**

**Memory, Monsters, and Magic: The Holocaust and Popular Culture**

**Modern Israel: History, Politics, and Society, 1882 - present**

**1948: History and Memory of the First Arab-Israeli War**

**Arabs and Jews in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880 - 1948**

**Arabs in Israel**

**Culture and Leisure in 20th Century Israel/Palestine**

**Economic History of Israel**

**Political Islam, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad**

**Water in Israel and the Middle East: Resilience, Sustainability, Security**

**Introduction to Judaism**

**Introduction to Hebrew Bible**

**A Rabbi and a Priest Walk into a Bar to Talk about God**

**American Judaism**

**God after the Holocaust**

**Kabbalah**



# UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS



Netta Keesom

## 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. The 2019 essay prize was awarded to Weinberg College senior **NETTA KEESOM**. Keesom's paper, titled "'Our Dear Nations': Esther Azhari Moyal and the Silhouette of an Arab-Jew," was written for Professor İpek Yosmaoğlu's course, "Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism." The paper analyzes one of Azhari Moyal's speeches as an illustration of her multiple identities. The analysis is framed and supported throughout by secondary sources written by top scholars in the field of Ottoman Jewish history. The essay reflects a clear understanding of Moyal as a product of her time and place even as it is also sensitive to the unique contours of Moyal's life and her contribution to Jewish, Arab, and Jewish-Arab societies.

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**LEV DASCHKO** (History), with the support of funding from the Neporany Doctoral Fellowship from the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, has completed another chapter of his dissertation on borderland policies towards Jews and other ethnic groups in Habsburg Bukovina. During the winter quarter, he served as a teaching assistant for "Global History: The Modern World." He plans to finish his dissertation in the coming year.

## C. TOVA MARKENSON

(Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama) defended her dissertation, "Entrance Forbidden to the Yiddish Theatres: Prostitution, Performance, and Protest in Buenos Aires, 1900-1930" with support from the Crown Family Center's Crown Graduate Fellowship and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Excerpts of her research are forthcoming in the journal *Modern Drama* and the anthology *Women on the Yiddish Stage* (Syracuse University Press). The Latin American Jewish Studies Association has awarded her the Edna Aizenberg Research Award to support her book project on gender, antisemitism, and Jewish migration. In the fall 2020, she will begin a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Research on Antisemitism at the Technische Universität in Berlin.

## RACHEL MERRILL MOSS

(Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama) is writing a dissertation on the interplay between Yiddish and Polish performances in interwar Łódź and Warsaw, which features two exciting archival script discoveries. In 2019-2020, she completed a Fulbright fellowship extension, co-convoked a Central, East European-focused working session for the American Society for Theatre Research, and presented her work at the Association for Jewish Studies conference. Moss is co-editor with Debra Caplan of the forthcoming collection, *The Dybbuk Century: The Jewish Play that Possessed the World*.

## ANASTASIYA NOVATORSKAYA

(History) is a second-year PhD student whose first-year project examined the political attitudes of ordinary Ukrainians during World War II.

**IDIL OZKAN** (Anthropology) is a third-year PhD student. Her exploratory research in Barcelona, Madrid, and Istanbul in the summers of 2018 and 2019 was funded by the Social Science Research Council, the Graduate School of Northwestern, the Keyman Turkish Studies

program, and the Fan Foster Foundation. Ozkan's research investigates Spain's citizenship offer to Sephardi Jews from an ethnographic, historical, and legal lens. More specifically, she examines the ways in which Sephardic identity and ancestry have been created, contested, and performed with a specific focus on the role of language. Her dissertation received a Pre-Dissertation Fellowship Honorable Mention from the Council for European Studies.

**BOGDAN PAVLISH** (History) specializes in the history of early modern Eastern Europe with a focus on Poland-Lithuania. His current research project deals with the Armenian diaspora of Poland-Lithuania and its role in mediating between Europe and the Middle East. Focusing on trans-regional networks of Armenian merchants, clerics, and missionaries based in southeast Poland-Lithuania, Pavlish examines social and religious dynamics across shifting political and confessional boundaries in the second half of the seventeenth century. He has done research in archives and libraries in Ukraine, Poland, and the Vatican. His other research interests include the history of global Catholic missions, European Jewry, the Ottoman Empire, the history and philosophy of knowledge, material culture, and art history.

**VANDA RAJCAN** (History) is a Ph.D. candidate specializing in post-World War II justice. During 2019-2020, she presented research at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in Evanston, at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, and at the Association for Jewish Studies in San Diego. She also presented at a Jewish Studies Faculty/Grad Student Colloquium. Rajcan received the 2020 Lacey Baldwin Smith Prize for Teaching Excellence for Outstanding Section Leader in the History Department. She is currently a fellow at the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., where she hopes to complete her dissertation entitled "Unpopular Justice: Holocaust-related Trials in Slovak People's Courts."

**ANASTASIIA SIMFEROVSKA** (Slavic Languages and Literatures) was on medical leave during winter and spring quarters 2019-2020. During her leave, she gathered sources (documents, pictures, letters, and memoirs) for her Jewish Studies project. She also conducted interviews for her research paper, “A Jewish Artist Between the Galut and the Land of Israel: Wilhelm Wachtel, Zeev Porath, Mikhail Steinberg,” and prepared an article on the artistic legacy of Jewish artists Zinovii Tolkachev and Henryk Beck and the broader question of the artistic legacy of the Holocaust.

**AMANDA RUPPENTHAL STEIN** (Musicology) was the 2018-2019 Crown Graduate Fellow and a recipient of a Northwestern Graduate Research Grant, which allowed her to conduct research at the National Library of Israel. Her dissertation, “Sounding *Judentum*: Assimilation, Art Music, and Being Jewish Musically in 19th Century Germany,” explores how art music served as an avenue of assimilation for German-speaking Jews and expands existing scholarly narratives on musical expressions of Judaism and Jewishness during this period. In 2019, Stein traveled twice to Uganda, conducting fieldwork in collaboration with a solidarity mission and recording project of the Cantors Assembly celebrating 100 Years of the Abayudaya Jewish community in Uganda.

**OMRI TUBI** (Sociology) began 2020 with data collection in Jerusalem and New York for his dissertation titled “Building a Strong Settler State: The Case of Israel.” Tubi’s article titled “Kill Me a Mosquito and I Will Build a State: Political Economy and the Socio-technicalities of Jewish Colonization in Palestine, 1922–1940” was published in the journal *Theory and Society*. The paper also received the best graduate student paper award from the American Sociological Association’s section on Global and Transnational Sociology.

**ARIEL WEINER** (Comparative Literary Studies and German) holds a Mellon Fellowship in Jewish Studies as well as a Doctoral Fellowship from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Her research considers relationships between religious and technical conceptions of mediation in twentieth century German-Jewish thought, particularly in the writings of Walter Benjamin.

# 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. **Alissa Schapiro**, a doctoral candidate in Art History who specializes in twentieth century American art and the history of photography, is the 2020–2021 fellowship recipient.

Schapiro will spend the year continuing work on her dissertation titled “‘Busy with Other News’: American Art, Visual Culture, and Antisemitism during World War II.”

Unlike the robust scholarship on art produced *after* the Holocaust, Schapiro’s work assesses how art and visual culture in America responded to Nazi terror *during* World War II in order to better understand the relationship between U.S. wartime cultural production and the Holocaust. She presents a narrative that traces specific artistic, institutional, performative, and mass media-related practices in order to understand the ways in which the American cultural field attempted to mediate knowledge of the ongoing mass genocide of Jews



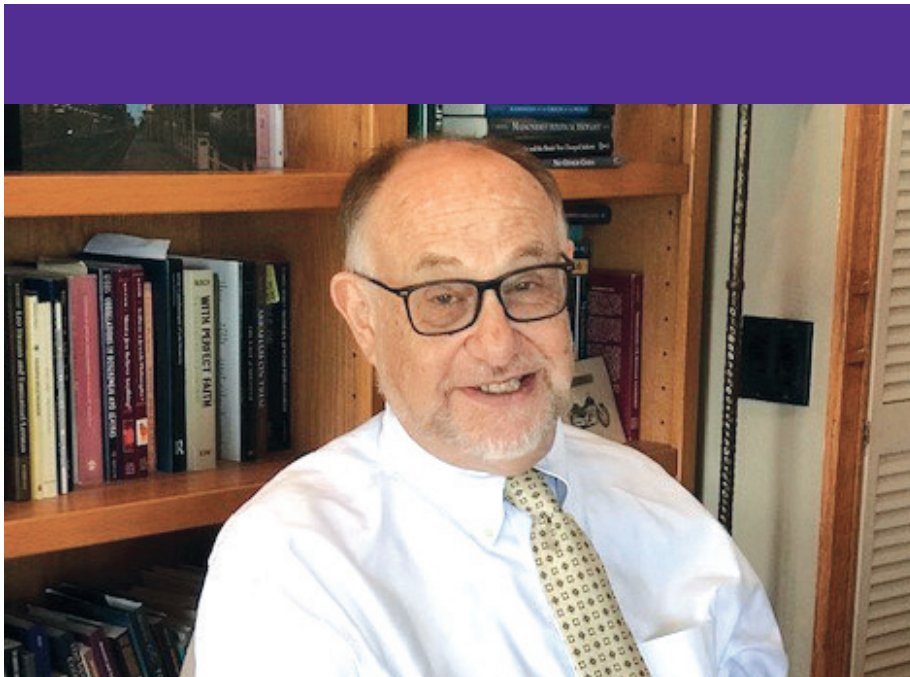
Alissa Schapiro

at the hands of the Nazis. Schapiro argues that while such artistic interventions were intended to create awareness of the plight of European Jews in various ways, the antisemitic history and culture of the United States ultimately rendered these efforts ineffective in terms of rousing the public and the government to the cause of saving Europe’s Jewish population.

Numerous institutions have supported Schapiro’s research through fellowships and grants, including the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Graduate School at Northwestern, the Holocaust Educational Foundation, and the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University.

Schapiro received her undergraduate degree in the History of Art and Architecture from Harvard University before earning a master’s degree in Curatorial Studies from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Schapiro, who has contributed to numerous museum exhibitions and catalogues, currently serves as assistant curator on the exhibition and associated publication “*Life Magazine and the Power of Photography*,” which opened at the Princeton University Art Museum in February 2020 and is slated to travel to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

# DECORATED PROFESSOR AND JEWISH STUDIES CHAMPION KENNETH SEESKIN RETIRES FROM NORTHWESTERN



Kenneth Seeskin

**A**fter nearly five decades as a Northwestern faculty member, Kenneth Seeskin called it a career in June 2020. The Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization, Seeskin joined the Northwestern faculty ranks in 1972 and enjoyed a 48-year run at his alma mater that featured numerous teaching awards, a prolific scholarly output highlighted by eight books, and an integral role in building the University's now-robust Jewish Studies program.

A multi-dimensional man with a professed love of Italy, Humphrey Bogart, and Wildcat sports—Seeskin chaired the University's Committee on Athletics and Recreation for 15 years—the 73-year-old father of two reflects on his passion for philosophy and commitment to Jewish Studies at Northwestern.

**When Seeskin arrived at Northwestern as an undergraduate in 1964, he had no specific major in mind.** That changed with one introductory philosophy course. "I compare my first touchpoint with philosophy to my first taste of chocolate ice cream, which is to say that it wasn't an acquired taste. Philosophy was asking the most basic of all questions—Why are we here? Does God exist? What kind of life should we lead?—and offering a series of brilliant alternatives."

**After earning his undergraduate degree in philosophy, Seeskin ventured to Yale University, where he secured master's and doctorate degrees in philosophy.**

Named an assistant professor in Northwestern's Department of Philosophy in 1972, Seeskin envisioned a long career in academia. "I loved the subject of philosophy. I wanted to read it, teach it, and research it for the rest of my life."

**Though initially hired as a Plato scholar, Seeskin's research soon gravitated to Maimonides and Spinoza.** A medieval philosopher, Maimonides attempted to produce a synthesis between Judaism and Aristotelianism, while Spinoza, an excommunicated Jew, revolutionized the study of the Bible and refuted ancient and medieval concepts of God. "Two absolutely fascinating figures."



“We wanted to build a program in which people were genuinely interested in the field not only because it was their background or heritage, but because it was a worthwhile field of study. And I believe we got there.”

Kenneth Seeskin

**Teaching thousands of students over 48 years, Seeskin loved the energy of the classroom: the flow of ideas, the lively discussions, the spontaneity.**

Seeskin, who captured the E. Leroy Hall Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1992 and served as the Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence from 1995-1998, hoped his courses inspired humility, open-mindedness, and curiosity. “There are always significant alternatives to consider, and I hoped to open students’ minds to that, so that their worldview was not closed or fixed, but rather fluid and dynamic.”

**To achieve that, Seeskin viewed teaching and research as connected endeavors.** “If you’re going to be successful in the classroom, especially with students of Northwestern’s caliber, then you better be continually rethinking and researching. I know I changed my mind several times as my research developed. I went into new areas. I explored new questions. That’s the growth of one’s mind.”

**Seeskin encouraged growth and passion in his students as well, especially undergraduates fretting over the economics of their career choice.**

“I watched my students go in all different directions—medicine, law, business, media, arts, and academia among them—because they pursued what was in their heart and went with that. That’s something I was proud to see.”

**Beyond his work in philosophy, Seeskin played a prominent role in the story of Jewish Studies at Northwestern, pulling inspiration from his collegiate experience.**

During Seeskin’s undergraduate years, around the same time Northwestern lifted an admissions quota on Jewish students, there was no Jewish Studies to speak of. Seeskin recalls Manfred Vogel, then the part-time director of Northwestern Hillel, teaching two Jewish Studies courses, one of which Seeskin took. “When people think of religious education, they think of Sunday School. I was not prepared for the critical study of religious texts and got a C-plus on my midterm. I got an A for the course, though, so I must have pulled myself together.”

**One of a handful of University faculty members whose research touched on Judaica, Seeskin advocated for the establishment of an undergraduate Jewish Studies program in the mid-1980s.** “We looked at the cumulative offerings and thought we had enough. This was a program created from the bottom up with teaching and research at its root.”

**The program’s first director in 1985, Seeskin championed the study of Jewish thought, text, and culture as a legitimate part of the arts and sciences.**

In fact, when former Northwestern President Arnold Weber asked Seeskin how he would evaluate the program’s success, Seeskin declared it would be when the percentage of Jewish students in the classroom was not any greater than the percentage of the campus’ overall Jewish student population. “We wanted to build a program in which people were genuinely interested in the field not only because it was their background or heritage, but because it was a worthwhile field of study. And I believe we got there.”

**Seeskin savors the development of the Jewish Studies program, which now boasts nearly two-dozen faculty members from across the campus as well as a lecture series, a graduate cluster, an annual essay prize, and active community participation.**

He credits much of that growth to passionate, engaged colleagues and a devoted donor base. “We put the word out, had high hopes for what we could accomplish, and were blessed to receive support that fostered our growth.”

**Now embarking upon retirement, Seeskin shares no concrete plans, only gratitude for a rich 48-year career at Northwestern.** “I grew as a person and a thinker and hope I helped students do the same.”

**DANNY M. COHEN**, Associate Professor of Instruction in the School of Education and Social Policy

In spring 2020, in response to the pandemic and the need for remote learning, Cohen's national nonprofit Unsilence launched *Hidden*—a set of free and highly interactive learning experiences that address marginalized histories and neglected issues in middle school and high school Holocaust education, including intergenerational trauma, the denial of reparations for Roma Holocaust survivors, and the experiences of the LGBTQ children of Jewish Holocaust survivors. *Hidden* includes: *I Saw Everything*, a photography exhibition exploring the research of scholar Michelle Kelso; *The Son*, an interactive testimony based on the story of Chicago activist Michael Bauer; *Hidden Pages*, a historical “webquest” created by Cohen and Northwestern student Dara McGreal; and *The 19th Window*, a choose-your-own-pathway mystery written by Cohen and based on his experiences as the grandson of a Jewish Holocaust survivor. Each *Hidden* learning experience is accompanied by a free educator guide designed by Cohen and Northwestern alum Sammi Oberman.

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

In addition to teaching “Gender, Race, and the Holocaust,” Cushman published several chapters in edited volumes: “Sexual Violence and Sexual Agency in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Women’s Camp,” in *Agency and the Holocaust, a volume in honor of Deborah Dwork* (Palgrave MacMillan); “The Auschwitz Women’s Camp: An Overview and Reconsideration” in the *Palgrave Handbook on Holocaust Literature and Culture* (Palgrave); “How Deep the Gray – ‘Privileged’ Jewish Women Prisoners in Auschwitz-Birkenau,” in *Women, The Holocaust, and Genocide* (Seton Hill University Press); “To Follow and to Lead – Feminist Mentorship in Holocaust Studies” in *We Could Have Been Them: Women Scholars Studying Women*

during the Holocaust; and “Commentary on Primo Levi’s ‘The Grey Zone’” in *The New Jewish Canon*, a title co-edited by Crown Center colleague Claire Sufrin (Academic Studies Press).

**MARTIN EICHENBAUM**, Charles Moskos Professor of Economics

**PETER FENVES**, Joan and Sarepta Harrison Professor of Literature, Professor of German, Comparative Literary Studies, Jewish Studies, and Asian Languages and Cultures

Fenves recently completed (with Julia Ng) a new translation and edition of Walter Benjamin’s 1921 essay “Toward the Critique of Violence.” The volume, which will be published by Stanford University Press in 2021, includes several sets of associated writings, including first-time English translations of certain portions of Hermann Cohen’s *Ethics of Pure Will* and Erich Unger’s *Politics and Metaphysics*. The volume seeks to cast a new light on German-Jewish thought in the early twentieth century and, in addition, demonstrate the degree to which the pressing problems of that era are also very much our own as well.

**MARCI FREEDMAN**, Sava Ranisavljevic Postdoctoral Fellow in Judeo-Spanish Studies

Freedman developed and taught three new courses this past year: “The Origins of Censorship,” “A History of Europe through Objects,” and “Encountering the Global Middle Ages.” In October, Freedman was an invited speaker for the Medieval History Seminar at the Institute for Medieval Studies at the University of Leeds, where she delivered a paper entitled “Historical Writing and Historical Consciousness among Medieval Jewish Communities” as part of her ongoing research into medieval Jewish historiography. Freedman completed a book chapter entitled “Teaching Benjamin of Tudela’s *Book of Travels*” to appear in an MLA Options for Teaching volume. Most recently, Freedman has been invited to write a *Cambridge Element* on the Jewish Diaspora in the Middle Ages.

**BENJAMIN FROMMER**, Associate Professor in the Department of History

In addition to teaching the “History of the Holocaust” survey and an advanced research seminar about post-Holocaust trials of Nazi war criminals, Frommer welcomed the publication of a collected volume that he co-edited and co-introduced: *Intermarriage from Central Europe to Central Asia: Mixed Families in the Age of Extremes* (Nebraska University Press). He also contributed an article to the volume, “Privileged Victims: Intermarriage between Jews, Czechs, and Germans in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.” This past winter, Frommer also authored a chapter on the Holocaust in *Zwischen Prag und Nikolsburg: Jüdisches Leben in den böhmischen Ländern (Between Prague and Mikulov: Jewish Life in the Bohemian Lands)*, which is forthcoming in Czech, English, and Hebrew.

**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

Hayes’ most recent publication (in cooperation with Christopher Browning) is a book entitled *German Railroads/Jewish Souls*, to which he contributed an essay demonstrating how little of Germany’s railway equipment was involved in the Holocaust and how little impact the killing had on the German war effort. He spent a week just before the pandemic struck as the Sara and Asa Shapiro Scholar in Residence at the University of Southern California, where he delivered a public lecture called “Makeshift Murder: The Holocaust at its Peak.” He also wrote chapters that appeared in a *Festschrift* for noted Holocaust historian Christopher Browning and a German volume on Nazi ideology and ethics, while also consulting on a Ken Burns documentary on the United States and the Holocaust.



**MAAYAN HILEL**, Postdoctoral Fellow  
in Israel Studies

Hilel won the 2019 Ph.D. Dissertation Award from the Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel. At Northwestern, she developed and taught two courses about the social and cultural history of Palestine and Israel throughout the twentieth century, focusing on aspects of daily life, leisure, popular culture, gender, and inter-communal relations. She published articles titled “Constructing Modern Identity - New Patterns of Leisure and Recreation in Mandatory Palestine” (*Contemporary Levant*) and “Changing Texture of Childhood: Palestinian Children as New Leisure Consumers in Mandatory Haifa” (*British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*). She also completed “Cultural Diplomacy in Haifa: The Role of Christian Communities in the Cultural Transformation in the City,” a chapter set to appear in *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918-1948*, a forthcoming title from Palgrave MacMillan. In addition, Hilel also worked on her book project, tentatively titled *Leisure, Pleasure, and Fun in Mandatory Palestine*; organized a panel on reframing childhood in the modern Middle East for the MESA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., in October 2020; and contributed several articles to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*.

**SARA HIRSCHHORN**, Visiting Assistant  
Professor in Israel Studies

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Hirschhorn drafted a book proposal and working sample chapter for a second major book project tentatively entitled “New Day in Babylon and Jerusalem: Zionism, Jewish Power, and Identity Politics since 1967,” supported by an Israel Studies research grant from the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. She published “The History and Politics of the Israeli Settler Movement and Prospects for Peace” (*Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, spring 2020) and a book chapter “Commentary on Peter Beinart’s ‘Failure of the American Jewish Establishment’” in *The New Jewish Canon* (Academic Studies Press), and is working on several other smaller projects. She taught two courses, “Modern Israel:

## New Anthology Chronicles Jewish Ideas



In the recently published *New Jewish Canon* (Academic Studies Press), associate professor of instruction Claire Sufrin and her co-editor Yehuda Kurtzer argue that the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been a period of mass production and proliferation of Jewish ideas and debates, often in response to major changes in Jewish life. Within the book, they offer a conceptual roadmap to make sense of such rapid change. With over eighty excerpts from key primary source texts and insightful corresponding essays by leading scholars, the *New Jewish Canon* is

divided into four sections: history and memory; Jewish politics and the public square; religion and religiosity; and identities and communities. Sufrin and Kurtzer aimed to create a book that could be text and textbook of the Jewish intellectual and communal zeitgeist for the contemporary period and the recent past, canonizing important ideas and debates of the past two generations and stimulating debate and scholarship about what is yet to come. It is intended for both a lay and scholarly audience.

History, Politics, and Society, 1882-Present” in winter 2020 and a first-year seminar on the 1948 War in spring 2020, while maintaining a robust profile in public engagement with academics, the foreign policy community, and lay audiences.

**ȘTEFAN CRISTIAN IONESCU**,

Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss-Holocaust  
Educational Foundation Visiting Associate  
Professor in Holocaust Studies

Ionescu was excited to join the Department of History as Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Visiting Associate Professor in Holocaust Studies in September 2019 and to participate in the activities of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. He completed several chapters published in edited volumes: “The Restitution of Jewish Jobs in the Aftermath of the Antonescu Regime” in *Agency and the Holocaust: Essays in Honor of Deborah Dwork* (Palgrave Macmillan) as well as “Legal Resistance through Petitions? The Strategies of Romanian Jewish Leader

Wilhelm Filderman, 1940-44” in *Resisting Persecution: Jews and their Petitions during the Holocaust* (Berghahn Books). Ionescu’s article, “Debates on the Restitution of Romanianized Property during the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944,” was also published in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*.

**LUCILLE KERR**, Professor in the  
Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Kerr’s teaching, research, and mentoring of students has continued to focus on the Latin American context with emphasis on works of fiction, testimonial texts, and films, which include materials by Jewish-Latin Americans. In winter 2020, she had the opportunity to offer an advanced undergraduate course titled “Jewish Argentina: From Jewish Gauchos to Contemporary Culture” for students in both Comparative Literary Studies and Spanish, incorporating substantive material based on her recent research on Jewish-Argentine testimonial production and the Jewish experience during the 1976-83 dictatorship.

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

In the last year, Lassner published *Middle East Politics and Historical Memory: Martyrdom, Revolution, and Forging National Identities* (IB Tauris). He was scheduled to present “The Murder of the Umayyads in Light of Ancient Rituals and Sources” at the Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, “Jerusalem and the Apocalypse” at a conference sponsored by Lutheran Research Center, and “The Islamic City and the Modern Western Metropolis” at a conference sponsored by the University of London. All three presentations, however, were cancelled due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

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

Lassner published the essays “The Quest for Holocaust Memory in Polish Films, 2012-2016” and “Fashion as Self-Authorship, Escape from Fascist Terror, and Witness Testimony.” She also co-edited *The Palgrave Handbook of Holocaust Literature and Culture* and co-wrote the introduction and co-edited the new edition of the Holocaust memoir *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* by Gisella Perl. She serves on the Education and Outreach Committee and the Exhibition Committee of the Illinois Holocaust Museum.

**MARCUS MOSELEY**, Associate Professor of Hebrew and Yiddish Literature

Moseley is pulling all of his manuscripts out of his desk to prepare a collection, *Around the Point: Essays on Hebrew and Yiddish Literature*.

**ANNA PARKINSON**, Associate Professor in the Department of German

As a Mellon New Directions Fellow in 2019-2020, Parkinson was granted leave to pursue advanced study in human rights and cultural anthropology at Columbia University;

forensic science, criminal justice, and forensic anthropology at John Jay College for Criminal Justice; and Spanish language study at the Cervantes Institute, New York. This training enhances the disciplinary breadth of her previous scholarship in German Studies on the significance of affect and politics in the wake of state sponsored violence in the postwar West German public sphere, while also allowing for comparative transnational research extending to the cultural afterlife of state-sponsored violence in the context of the Global South (here, specifically, South Africa and Chile).

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

In 2019-20, Petrovsky-Shtern was actively publishing, researching, writing, painting, giving lectures, supervising his museum research group, and participating in multiple on-campus events. He prepared 12 essays for the book *Uman: a Historical Guide* (forthcoming in Ukrainian and English), drafted two chapters for his book on Rabbi Levi Yitshak of Berdichev, and finalized two chapters for his long-lasting book project on the history of modern laughter. In 2020, Petrovsky-Shtern was awarded a fellowship at the Israeli Institute for Advanced Studies. He spent his spring/summer term working on his book chapter focused on the Ukrainian contexts of Zeev Jabotinsky as part of the research group “Cosmopolitan Odessa.” In addition, Petrovsky-Shtern published a chapter on the Russian cultural and military contexts of Yosif Trumpldor, which appeared in Hebrew in a volume dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the destruction of Tel Hai (Makhon Ben Zvi). The research for this work was supported by an Israel Studies Research Grant from the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. His book chapter on archival sources appeared in a collective monograph *Hasidism: Studying Sources, Methods, Perspectives* (Rutgers University Press).

**ELIE REKHESS**, Crown Visiting Professor in Israel Studies, Visiting Professor in the Department of History, and Associate Director of Israel Studies

Rekhess began the academic year by co-leading the second annual Israel Global Engineering Trek: Water, a two-week international program for rising second and third-year undergraduates to explore Israel's water innovation and technology scene. In the fall, he gave a series of three lectures at Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Deerfield, Illinois, on political turmoil in Israel, the Arab minority, and the security threats Israel faces. Rekhess also co-organized “The Promise of Biomed: Symposium on Joint Biomed Projects: Tel Aviv University and Northwestern University” in January, and he lectured in March on “Third Time's the Charm: Analyzing the Israeli Election” at the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel at Michigan State University. He published a chapter entitled “Netanyahu's Policies toward Israel's Arab Sector” in *Israel Under Netanyahu* (Routledge).

**KENNETH SEESKIN**, Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization and Professor in the Department of Religious Studies

After 48 years of service, Seeskin retired in June 2020. He helped found the Jewish Studies Program in 1985 and was its first director. His latest book, *Thinking about the Prophets: A Philosopher Reads the Bible*, was published by the Jewish Publication Society this fall.

**LILAH SHAPIRO**, Assistant Professor of Instruction, School of Education and Social Policy

**DAVID SHYOVITZ**, Associate Professor in the Department of History and Director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies

Shyovitz spent the 2019-20 academic year at work on his book manuscript, “Jews, Animals, and Jewish Animals in the Middle Ages,” and also completed an article on the authorship of the influential medieval text



*Sefer Hasidim* (forthcoming in the journal *Jewish History*). He delivered invited lectures at Rutgers University and Yeshiva University as well as the Winter Shapiro Lecture at the Catholic Theological Union and the Abraham Joshua Heschel Lecture at Elmhurst College. He also led a Jewish history study trip to Italy under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. When Northwestern courses moved online in the spring quarter, Shyovitz taught a Zoom course on the history of Jewish-Christian relations and an advanced undergraduate seminar on the history of the blood libel.

**CLAIRE SUFRIN**, Associate Professor of Instruction in the Jewish Studies Program and Assistant Director of Jewish Studies

Sufrin continued her research in religion and literature while teaching courses in American Judaism and post-Holocaust theology as well as a first-year seminar in Jewish-Christian dialogue. *The New Jewish Canon: Ideas and Debates 1980-2015*, which she co-edited with Yehuda Kurtzer, was published in July 2020 by Academic Studies Press.

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

Seltzer, along with her colleagues Ragy Mikhaeel and Oya Topcuoglu, received a grant from the Alumnae of Northwestern University for their project “Middle Eastern Cities and Their Cultural Influence: Cairo-Istanbul-Jerusalem.” This grant allowed her to develop a new class about the city of Jerusalem, which she will be teaching for third-year Hebrew students in the coming year. She also wrote a new communicative online placement exam for Hebrew learners to replace the existing written placement exam. In addition, she presented the acclaimed Israeli movies “Fill the Void” and “The Cakemaker” in the Israeli film series she curates for students in the MENA Languages Program.

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

As co-editor-in-chief of *Prooftexts*, Wimpfheimer recently published an issue in memory of Jewish literature scholar Alan Mintz. He also took over as co-chair of the Rabbinics Division of the Association for Jewish Studies.

**IPEK K. YOSMAOĞLU**, Associate Professor in the Department of History

Yosmaoğlu began serving as the director of the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program at the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs in fall 2019. Under her directorship, the Keyman Program will continue collaborative programming with the Middle East and North African Studies Program and the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies to support Sephardic Studies at Northwestern. Talks delivered by Michelle Campos (University of Florida) in October 2019 and Devi Mays (University of Michigan) in November 2019 were the result of such collaboration and brought together an interdisciplinary group of faculty and students. Campos and Mays also made guest appearances at Yosmaoğlu’s undergraduate seminar on “Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism” to talk about the craft of history and discuss their work with the students. Yosmaoğlu continues to work on her manuscript project about the transformation of state policies concerning Ottoman (and subsequently Turkish) Jews against the background of transitions from empires to nation-states during and after WWI. The book she is co-editing with Kerem Öktem, “*Guests in their Homeland: Turkish Jews and Their Diasporas*,” is scheduled for publication by Palgrave Macmillan in fall 2020.



## Congratulations to Elie Rekhess on his new appointment

In the summer of 2020, Professor Elie Rekhess concluded his term as Associate Director of Israel Studies at the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies. Rekhess arrived at Northwestern as a Visiting Professor of Israel Studies in 2009, and took on the role of Associate Director in 2013.

As a teacher, researcher, and administrator, he has invigorated the academic study of Israeli history, culture, and society on campus, and has helped to forge close relationships with leading Israeli scholars and academic institutions. Due to his indefatigable efforts, the Crown Family Center has hosted successful conferences and workshops, forged partnerships with diverse partners on campus, and put Northwestern on the map as a leader in the field of Israel Studies.

Previously Rekhess served as a Senior Research Fellow in the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, and headed the Program on Jewish-Arab Cooperation in Israel sponsored by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (1995-2010).

Rekhess will continue to teach courses for the Crown Family Center, as he simultaneously heads up the Israel Innovation Project, an initiative focused on promoting technological and scientific collaborations between Northwestern and Israeli academic institutions.

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Israel Global Engineering Trek

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