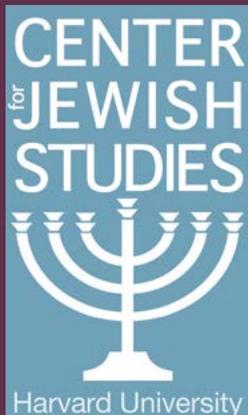




cjs NEWS



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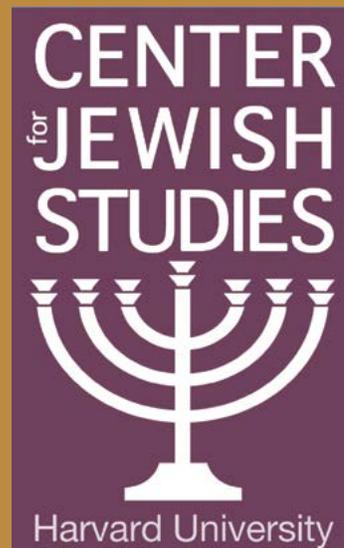
PETER MACHINIST, 2016

WHAT IS THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES?

The Center for Jewish Studies serves as an umbrella organization, encompassing and coordinating the many academic and extra-curricular programs in Jewish Studies at Harvard University. Faculty, courses, and other academic programs at the University are located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Harvard Divinity School, and the Harvard Law School. The Center supports student and faculty research, teaching, and visiting research scholars from around the world in Jewish studies.

We also sponsor and co-sponsor conferences, lectures, and seminars and work closely with departments across the Harvard campus, as well as with the Mahindra Center for the Humanities, the Center for European Studies, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, and the Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law at Harvard Law School. The Judaica Division of Widener Library boasts one of the world's greatest library collections in the world. Taken together, Harvard offers a depth and breadth of resources in Jewish Studies to students and scholars virtually unparalleled anywhere in the world.

ON THE COVER: Jack Lew and Noah Feldman on Identity, Faith, and Responsibility (see page 10 for detail).



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David Stern

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Peter J. Solomon

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PHOTOGRAPHY: Ilene Perlman and CJS staff

DESIGN: Erin Dowling Design



DAVID STERN

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It seems like only yesterday that I wrote the Director’s Letter for last spring’s Center for Jewish Studies Newsletter! That is how busily and quickly the past semester passed for us. The fall semester began with the Center and Government Department co-sponsoring an international conference on migrations across modern Europe. In October, we co-sponsored this year’s List Lecture (with the Harvard Divinity School Center for the Study of World Religions), a fascinating discussion on exile and other matters between the famed novelist **André Aciman** and the journalist **Benjamin Balint**. Later that month, **Jeffrey Shandler** (Rutgers) delivered the annual Pat Lecture in Yiddish (co-sponsored with the Judaica Division of Widener Library) on “Absolut Tshotchke: Materializing the Mother Tongue.” A few days later, **David Shyo-**

vitz (Northwestern) gave our annual Medieval Studies-Jewish Studies Lecture (co-sponsored with the Committee on Medieval Studies) on “Soul Food and Salvation: Eating Animals in Medieval Ashkenaz.” And in November, our annual Doft Lecture drew a very substantial audience to hear **Jack Lew** (Former Secretary of the Treasury and Chief of Staff under President Obama, and Director of the Office of Management and Budget under Presidents Clinton and Obama), and **Noah Feldman** (Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law and Director, Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law) discuss “Identity, Faith, and Public Responsibility.” Those were only a select few of the more than twenty talks, presentations, performances, and screenings that the Center sponsored or co-sponsored during the semester.

We also welcomed our new Preceptor in Yiddish language, **Dr. Sara Feldman**. Sara Feldman and **Saul Zaritt**, Assistant Professor of Yiddish and Modern Jewish Literature, are together bringing new energy to Yiddish at Harvard. During the semester, **Osnat Aharoni**, Teaching Assistant for the Modern Hebrew Language Program, together with **Dr. Irit Aharony**, the Program’s Director, developed a wildly inventive and highly popular escape room program for their students. Inside this newsletter, articles describe both Sara and the escape room more fully. Next year, we hope Yiddish and Hebrew will escape together!

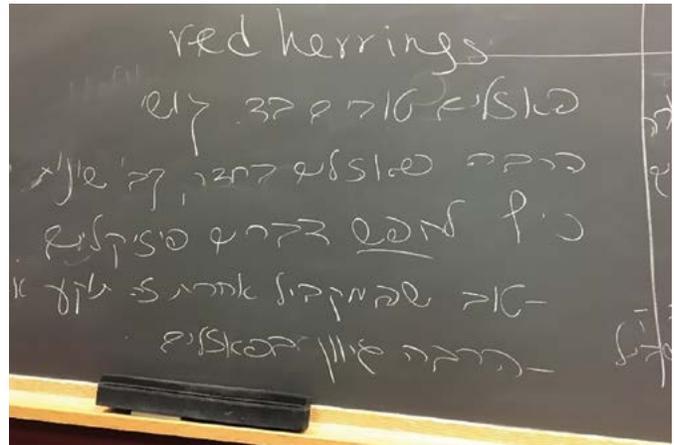
In October, the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies held our annual New York meeting at the office of **Peter Solomon**, President of the Friends, and we celebrated Peter’s 80th Birthday. Happy Birthday, Peter! The fall also saw the establishment of a new fund dedicated to undergraduate and graduate student research, initiated by **Samuel J. Lissner** ’08. We are also finalizing a second new fund for the same purpose, donated by **Merrill Berman** ’60. The Center expresses its heartfelt gratitude to Sam and Merrill. Inside the newsletter, you can read profiles of two of our students, one an undergraduate, the other a graduate student, and how they and their projects have benefitted so enormously from the support the Center has been able to give them.

It goes without saying that none of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of all our supporters and donors. On behalf of my faculty colleagues and the students associated with the Center, we express our warmest thanks and appreciation for all your encouragement and support.



With best wishes as always,

David Stern
Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and
Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature



LEFT: Third-year developers' team meeting to create theme for game. RIGHT: Ideas and suggestions for game design following commercial escape room activity.

Yehuda Ha'Maccabi's **SECRET FORCE ESCAPE ROOM PROJECT** Modern Hebrew Fall 2018

by *Osnat Aharoni*

Teaching Assistant for the Modern Hebrew Language Program

DURING THE FALL SEMESTER 2018, three modern Hebrew classes participated in a Hebrew language escape room pilot project. The modern Hebrew program is headed by Dr. Irit Aharony. The escape room project, funded by the Harvard Foreign Language Advisory Group and the Center for Jewish Studies, was conceived and implemented by the modern Hebrew Teaching Assistant,

Ms. Osnat Aharoni (no family relation). Escape rooms are a popular physical adventure game, in which players are locked in a room and must follow hidden clues and work together to solve a series of puzzles in order to escape within a set time limit. Described as “video games come to life,” these themed entertainment activities have become extremely popular with young adults worldwide.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Our escape room was based around solving an adventure challenge. The students had one hour to find the answer by deciphering smaller puzzles, unveiling clues, and ultimately unlocking a box holding the answer to the challenge. With all the clues and puzzles in Hebrew, this game not only taught critical thinking, teamwork, and complex problem solving, but also required students to use their Hebrew language skills. Harvard's modern Hebrew program offers four years of language courses to undergraduate and graduate students from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Law School, and other Harvard schools. Our classes

are small yet diverse, and we pride ourselves on creating a strong sense of community through our choice of materials as well as our pedagogy. We chose this project to give students the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they gained in class by developing a product for presentation to a real audience, keeping in mind that our students study Hebrew at many different levels.

We involved three groups of modern Hebrew students. The advanced (third-year) students developed the game. Their familiarity with the program's course material and our teaching styles prepared them to create this activity for the beginner

students. The class dedicated our weekly discussion hour to developing the escape room.

The seminar (fourth-year) students tested the activity and provided feedback. Our intermediate (second-year) students played the final version of the game. With the planned release date in December, we chose a Hanukkah theme. We began the project by visiting a commercial escape room in downtown Boston to lay the guidelines for the escape room developed by the class.

The development process turned out to be long and detailed, required a lot of teamwork, and was not free of some heated deliberations—conducted largely in Hebrew! The beginning of the semester was dedicated to researching Hanukkah, discussing and formulating questions about the holiday, its origins, historical content, modern interpretation and traditions. The students worked individually and shared their research and findings in class.

Next, we developed the theme. Students debated different options, from “a search for Grandma’s lost latkes recipe” to “a quest for the miraculous vessel of oil.” This exercise required students to describe complex ideas in detail and critique their peers’ ideas in real time, taking into account the compatibility of their choice with the linguistic level of the second-year students (their target audience), while considering cost and viability.

As the middle of the semester approached, a storyline was agreed upon and the students divided into smaller groups to work on particular tasks. Some wrote an introduction to explain the background and rules of the activity to players.

With the clues and puzzles in Hebrew, this game not only taught critical thinking, teamwork, and complex problem solving, but also required students to use their Hebrew language skills.

Others created a video clip to lay out the objectives of the game with help from Kevin Guiney, Senior Instructional Technologist at the Harvard Academic Technology Group. Students worked in pairs to create the seven different puzzles that would together form the activity, with vocabulary suited to the second-year players. Marlon Kuzmik and his amazing staff at the Bok Center Learning Lab not only provided a creatively inspirational space, but also video-recorded much of our preparatory work and the actual runs of the game, which helped us gather feedback and refine the project.

After several hours in the Learning Lab, the developers set up a mock run of the game at the end of the semester to be tested by the fourth-year students. In a debriefing session that followed, testers provided much-

welcomed critique (in Hebrew). Developers attended two of three final runs held in November for the second-year students. Despite each group’s different level of success in reaching the goal of the game, all found the fun contagious. Students enjoyed it tremendously, and several mentioned this activity as a highlight in their course evaluations. One student remarked that the “innovative escape room idea was a true success and I’m glad to have had the opportunity to play a role in it.” Students developed important language skills, as well as a true sense of community. We will continue to use *Yehuda Ha’Maccabi’s* Secret Force Escape Room with future modern Hebrew students, and the concepts we learned will continue to be a part of the innovative pedagogic strategies we implement in modern Hebrew teaching at Harvard, positioning our program at the forefront of educational program design. ■



LEFT: Third-year developers and second-year players gather at the Bok Center Learning Lab to debrief after escape room activity. RIGHT: Third-year developers at a commercial escape room in Boston for an introductory activity.



SARA FELDMAN

Dr. Feldman is teaching a course this spring on Yiddish film, beginning with classic Yiddish movies of the 1930s and 40s (the “golden age” of Yiddish film) and extending into Yiddish YouTube Web series and contemporary filmic depictions of the Hasidic world.

WELCOME SARA FELDMAN

by Saul Zaritt

Assistant Professor of Yiddish Literature, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Department of Comparative Literature

WE ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME Sara Feldman as our new preceptor in Yiddish. Dr. Feldman comes to us from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she was a lecturer of Hebrew and Yiddish. She received her Ph.D. in 2014 in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on how Hebrew and Yiddish writers contended with the Russian literary tradition, in particular through translation, from Jewish adaptations of Pushkin’s Russian folk poetry and his subsequent canonization in Hebrew and Yiddish literatures to the necessary reading of the Hebrew poet H.N. Bialik as deeply embedded in a Russian literary context. Dr. Feldman also has scholarly interest in contemporary Jewish life, with essays that explore representations of orthodox and ex-orthodox Jews (those who have gone “off the *derekh*,” off the righteous path) as well as on the popular Amazon streaming series *Transparent*. Dr. Feldman is a skilled

tango dancer and has even done some research, hopefully to be published soon, on the connection between Yiddish culture and tango. She has performed on the Yiddish stage and co-organized workshops and programs on the translation and contemporary performance of Yiddish theater. Dr. Feldman teaches three levels of Yiddish at Harvard in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. She is also teaching a course this spring on Yiddish film, beginning with classic Yiddish movies of the 1930s and 40s (the “golden age” of Yiddish film) and extending into Yiddish YouTube Web series and contemporary filmic depictions of the Hasidic world.

The Center for Jewish Studies is grateful to the **Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation Yiddish Language Instruction Fund** and the **Esther Miller Endowed Fund for Yiddish Studies** for supporting the Yiddish Preceptorship. ■

WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSOR

THE GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSORSHIP, the generous gift of Gerard Weinstock, allows us to bring distinguished professors from outside Harvard to supplement our course offerings in areas of Jewish studies not covered by our current faculty. **Our Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor during the fall semester was Yair Zakovitch**, Father Takeji Otsuki Professor of Bible, Emeritus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Many of our students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with Professor Zakovitch, who taught two classes this year:

“Biographies in the Hebrew Bible”

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

“Reading the Song of Songs”

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations



YAIR ZAKOVITCH

CENTER
for
JEWISH
STUDIES

Faculty Activities

SHAYE J.D. COHEN



Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Professor Shaye J.D. Cohen is offering a free online course, “Judaism Through Its Scriptures,” in the Harvard Divinity School’s *World Religions Through Their Scriptures XSeries Program*.

Online courses are a fairly new idea. Harvard’s online courses are provided by EdX, which was created by The Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University in May 2012 to make online university-level courses accessible to a worldwide student body.

To see more, visit these sites:

Professor Cohen’s course description:

www.edx.org/course/judaism-through-its-scriptures

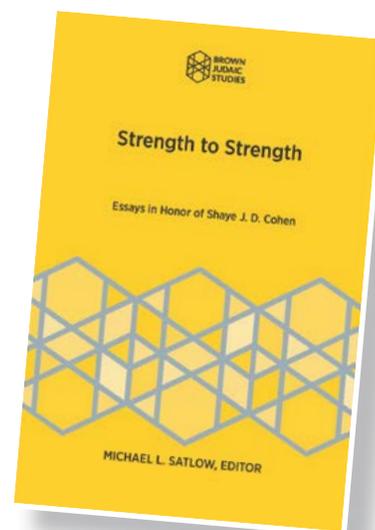
World Religions Through Their Scriptures Program video trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7G2Cy3b3OE

HarvardX (online course list): harvardx.harvard.edu/

Congratulations to Professor Cohen on the newly-published Festschrift in his honor!

Strength to Strength: Essays in Honor of Shaye J.D. Cohen, edited by Michael L. Satlow (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018), contains 39 original essays by many of the leading scholars in his field. It also contains a full bibliography of Professor Cohen’s writings and an appreciation. For more information, go to: mlsatlow.com/2018/11/14/strength-to-strength-essays-in-honor-of-shaye-j-d-cohen/.

To read this and any of Shaye’s articles, see Shaye’s academia page here: harvard.academia.edu/ShayeJDCohen.



PETER E. GORDON

Amabel B. James Professor of History, Faculty Affiliate in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and Faculty Affiliate in the Department of Philosophy, Harvard University

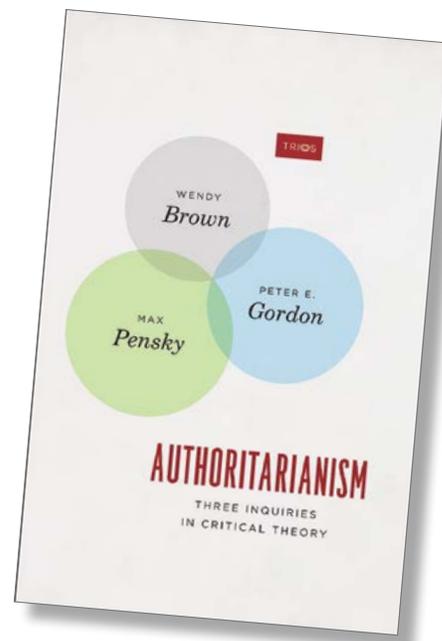


PETER E. GORDON

Peter Gordon recently coauthored *Authoritarianism: Three Inquiries in Critical Theory* (Chicago, 2018; co-authored with Wendy Brown and Max Pensky), which contains his essay on the reconstruction and analysis of the 1950 *Authoritarian Personality study* (Theodor Adorno et al), a landmark study in the field of social and political psychology which aimed to uncover the roots of anti-Semitism and incipient fascist forms in the United States.

View the University of Chicago Press book page here:

www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/A/bo34094320.html



JON D. LEVENSON

Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies, Harvard Divinity School

Jon Levenson's "A 'View of Judaism in Its Own Terms:' Some Historical Reflections on Jewish Studies at HDS" appeared in the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* (Autumn/Winter 2018). (Professor Levenson adds that Professors Wolfson and Twersky, who were closely connected to the CJS, appear in the article.)

Recent lectures include: "The Binding of Isaac and the Crucifixion of Jesus" at the Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX; and "Response to Guy G. Stroumsa: 'The Comparative Study of the Abrahamic Religions: Heuristic Gains and Cognitive Pitfalls,'" keynote lecture at a conference on "The Abrahamic Religions: Between Scholarship and Practice," co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of World Religions of Harvard Divinity School and the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue, Cambridge, MA.

View the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* article here:

bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/articles/autumnwinter2018/view-judaism-its-own-terms



JON D. LEVENSON

DEREK J. PENSLAR, FRSC

William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History in the Department of History, Harvard University



DEREK PENSLAR

In 2018, **Derek Penslar** completed *Theodor Herzl: The Charismatic Leader* for the Yale University Press' "Jewish Lives" series and published "Declarations of (In)Dependence: Tensions Within Zionist Statecraft, 1896–1948," in *The Journal of Levantine Studies*, and "1897: The Year of Jewish Revolutions?" in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*.

Penslar delivered papers and invited talks at the Association for Israel Studies in Berkeley, the Association for Jewish Studies in Boston, as well as at other institutions in the US and abroad, including Tel Aviv University where he was a visiting fellow of the Sackler Institute for Advanced Studies.

He convened a conference at Harvard in November on "Re-Organizing the Middle East: 1912–1948," which was co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and Center for European Studies, all at Harvard, and supported by the Knapp Family Foundation.

In June of 2018, he became the President of the American Academy for Jewish Research.

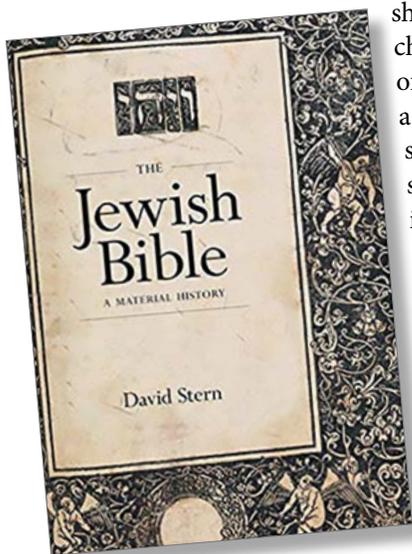
DAVID STERN

Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Hebrew and Jewish Literature, Professor of Comparative Literature, and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University

David Stern's latest book, *The Jewish Bible: A Material History* (University of Washington Press, 2017) explores the Jewish Bible as a material object, apart from its function as a medium for transmitting its text. Whether it is a scroll, a codex, a digital copy, or something else, its changes in physical

shape cut across the entire chronology and geography of Jewish history and offer a fresh approach to understanding the Bible's place, significance, and symbolism in Jewish culture.

In December 2018, the book won an Association for Jewish Studies' Jordan Schnitzer Book Award, which is given to recognize and promote outstanding scholarship in the field of Jewish Studies.



In April 2018, Professor Stern was honored with the Walter Channing Cabot Fellowship which he received for the academic year. He was given this award to reflect his outstanding contributions to his field, including the publication of *The Jewish Bible: A Material History*.

On March 8, *The Harvard Gazette* featured an article about Prof. Stern's Freshman Seminar, which brings first-year students into Houghton Library to work with some of Harvard's rarest books. See page 28 for more details.

View other Stern articles here:

perspectives.ajsnet.org/the-oldnew-media-issue/old-media-and-older-media/

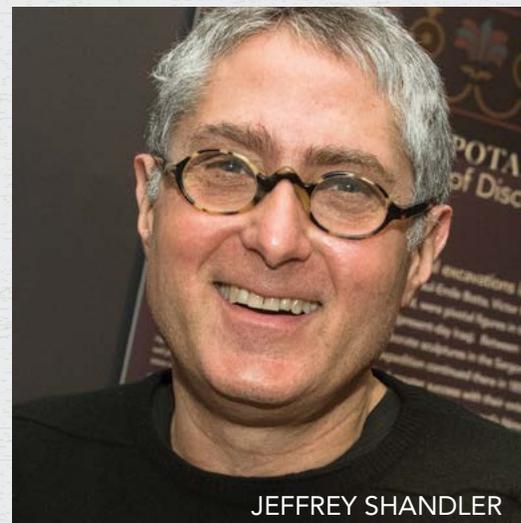
www.jewishhistory.fm/the-jewish-bible-as-a-material-object-with-david-stern/

www.jordanschnitzer.org/jordan-schnitzer-book-awards/complit.fas.harvard.edu/congratulations-professor-david-stern-cabot-fellow

nelc.fas.harvard.edu/cabot-fellowship-awarded-professor-david-stern



GIL RUBIN



JEFFREY SHANDLER

AUGUST 28–29, 2018

Circulating Across Europe: Transgressive Narratives About the Past Conference

FÉLIX KRAWATZEK AND GEORGE SOROKA

Conveners

Hosted by the Government Department at Harvard University, made possible by the generous financial support of Dr. Lisbeth Tarlow

Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative Research in Judaica with the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University; the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University; the Department of History, Harvard University; Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University; and the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University

OCTOBER 3, 2018

On Exile and Elsewhere: André Aciman in conversation with Benjamin Balint

ANDRÉ ACIMAN AND BENJAMIN BALINT

Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR)
List Lecture in Jewish Studies, Harvard Divinity School

Discussion with André Aciman and Benjamin Balint on themes of exile and homecoming, of time, place, identity, and art across Aciman's works of fiction and nonfiction.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School; Department of Comparative Literature, Harvard University; and Harvard Hillel

OCTOBER 4, 2018

The Italian Executioners: The Genocide of the Jews of Italy

SIMON LEVIS SULLAM

Associate Professor of Modern History, Ca' Foscari, University of Venice

William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University

OCTOBER 10, 2018

Golda Meir (1898–1978)

SAMUEL D. KASSOW

Charles H. Northam Professor of History, Trinity College

PNINA LAHAV

Professor of Law and member of the faculty of the Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies, Boston University

Co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; with the Great Russian Jews That Shaped the World Panel Series and the Seminar on Russian and Eurasian Jewry, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University

JEWISH STUDIES STUDENT WORKSHOP

MEETING DATES: 10/9/18, 10/23/18,
11/6/18, 11/20/18

OCTOBER 11, 2018

*Expelling the Jews: Wartime Plans to Expel Jews from Eastern Europe after the Second World War***GIL RUBIN**

Israel Institute Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; Co-Chair, Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University

Connecting the histories of Eastern Europe and the Middle East by demonstrating how debates over the future of minorities in postwar Eastern Europe reshaped the terms of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine.

Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund with the *Jews in Modern Europe Study Group*, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University

OCTOBER 19, 2018

*Current Trends in Israeli Music***TAMAR (TAMI) MACHNAI**

Singer, composer, and specialist in contemporary interpretations and traditional performances of Middle Eastern, Israeli and Jewish folk music, Tamar Machnai has performed all over the world.

A thorough review of the different tendencies in Israeli popular and contemporary music, from Shlomo Artzi to Yemen Blues.

Harry Edison Fund



TAMAR MACHNAI WITH IRIT AHARONY

OCTOBER 22, 2018

*Absolut Tshotchke: Materializing the Mother Tongue***JEFFREY SHANDLER**

Professor, Department of Jewish Studies, Rutgers University

Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund with the *Jacob and Frieda Pat Endowment* in the Harvard College Library, Judaica Division, Widener Library

OCTOBER 29, 2018

*Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies, New York Reception***DAVID STERN**

Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Hebrew and Jewish Literature, Professor of Comparative Literature, and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University

The Director updated Friends of the CJS on recent events and new initiatives at the Center—our new faculty, our many lectures series, special talks and conferences, and our initiatives in raising our profile among the undergraduate student population. Each annual meeting also features a faculty member who will discuss his or her research. This year, Professor Saul Zaritt gave a presentation on *Yiddish Afterlives*.

Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies; Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies



AUDIENCE AT DAVID BIALE LECTURE



DAVID SHYOVITZ

OCTOBER 30, 2018

Soul Food and Salvation: Eating Animals in Medieval Ashkenaz

DAVID SHYOVITZ

Associate Professor, Department of History, Northwestern University

A presentation situating persistent zoomorphism in Ashkenazic illuminated manuscripts in a theological context. Specifically, Shyovitz examines the earliest surviving Ashkenazic zoomorphic image (a rendering of the rabbinic "heavenly banquet" motif depicted in the early-thirteenth century Ambrosian Bible), and the theological anxieties over the ethics of carnivorousness, the eligibility of animals for eschatological salvation, and the limits of both "human" and "animal" identity.

Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with the Committee on Medieval Studies, Harvard University; and the Jewish Cultures and Societies Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University

OCTOBER 30, 2018

"Menashe" & Musa Syeed Talk: Presentation for Yiddish Program

MUSA SYEED

A screening and Q&A with screenwriter Musa Syeed (for students only)

Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund

HEBREW BIBLE WORKSHOP

MEETING DATES: 10/18/18, 11/1/18, 11/12/18,
11/29/18, 12/13/18



YAIR ZAKOVITZ

NOVEMBER 1, 2018

Are Possible Facts Real? An Avicennian Vignette

SARI NUSSEIBEH

Professor of Philosophy; President Emeritus, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem

Co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University; Medieval Studies Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University; Department of Philosophy, Harvard University; and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, Harvard University

NOVEMBER 1, 2018

The Hidden Dictionary of the Bible

YAIR ZAKOVITZ

Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies, Harvard University; Father Takeji Otsuki Professor of Bible, Emeritus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund with the Hebrew Bible Workshop

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Jack Lew and Noah Feldman: A Public Conversation: Identity, Faith and Public Responsibility

JACK LEW

Former Secretary of the Treasury and Chief of Staff under President Obama; Director of the Office of Management and Budget (under Presidents Clinton and Obama)

NOAH FELDMAN

Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law; Senior Fellow of the Society of Fellows; Director, Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law

Alan and Elisabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund with the Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law, Harvard Law School

NOVEMBER 8, 2018

From Swastika to Jim Crow: German Jewish Refugee Scholars in the Southern United States, 1938–1965

BRITTA WALDSCHMIDT-NELSON

Professor of Transatlantic History and Culture, University of Augsburg

An examination of the shared experiences of forced migration, discrimination and exclusion by the African and Jewish diasporas which occurred as Jewish refugee scholars fled Nazi Germany from the 1930s to the 1960s and arrived to teach at colleges and universities in the US South, a history so far little examined in the United States or Germany.

Joseph Engel Fund with the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, Harvard University



BRITTA WALDSCHMIDT-NELSON

NOVEMBER 8, 2018

Kristallnacht as Crescendo and Overture

PETER HAYES

Professor of History and German, Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation

Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund with the Dudleian Lectures, Harvard Divinity School; and the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University



JORDAN PENKOWER

NOVEMBER 12, 2018

The Oldest Complete Torah Scroll: How It Differs from Contemporary Scrolls

JORDAN PENKOWER

Professor of Hebrew Bible, The Zalman Shamir Bible Department, Bar-Ilan University

Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund with the Hebrew Bible Workshop



NOAH FELDMAN AND JACK LEW

NOVEMBER 15, 2018

A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism

PAUL HANEBRINK

Associate Professor of History, Rutgers University

A discussion about why the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism (a fantasy that communism was a Jewish plot to destroy the nations of Europe) endured for so long in so many places and what legacy this idea has left for the contemporary far right on both sides of the Atlantic.

William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University



ANTHONY RUSSELL AND DMITRI GASKIN

NOVEMBER 28, 2018

Vasily Grossman (1905–1964)

BORIS LANIN

Head of Literature and Professor at the Academy of Education of Russia

ALEXANDRA POPOFF

Scholar and award-winning author of literary biographies

Co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; the Great Russian Jews That Shaped the World Panel Series and the Seminar on Russian and Eurasian Jewry, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University

DECEMBER 4, 2018

Redemption Through Sin: The Biographical Background to Gershom Scholem's Most Famous Essay

DAVID BIALE

Emanuel Ringelblum Distinguished Professor of Jewish History, University of California, Davis and the Director of the Program in Jewish Studies

Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, the Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University; and the Jewish Cultures and Societies Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University

DECEMBER 5, 2018

Anthony Russell and Dmitri Gaskin Performance and Guided Talk: Presentation for Yiddish Program

ANTHONY RUSSELL AND DMITRI GASKIN

Anthony Russell is a vocalist, composer and arranger specializing in Yiddish song.

In 2017, he teamed up with accordionist and pianist Dmitri Gaskin to form a duo, *Tsvey Broider* (Two Brothers), for the composition and performance of new songs in the Yiddish language. They performed their award-winning interpretations of Yiddish songs (for students only).

Joseph Engel Fund

DECEMBER 11, 2018

Isaiah Berlin: Philosopher of Freedom (Film Screening)

JUDITH WECHSLER

Professor Emerita, Tufts University

A 72-minute documentary film tracing the development of the ideas of Isaiah Berlin in the context of his life and times through interviews with Sir Isaiah, by Michael Ignatieff, his biographer, and others.

William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University

DECEMBER 17, 2018

ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES (AJIS) CONFERENCE RECEPTION

A reception to congratulate Professor Shaye Cohen on the publication of a Festschrift in his honor.

Josephine and Martin Gang Memorial Fund with the Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law, Harvard Law School

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PETER J. SOLOMON!

'60, MBA '63

The Center for Jewish Studies wants to offer our warm congratulations to **Mr. Peter J. Solomon**, '60, MBA '63, and wish him all the best on his 80th birthday. We are immensely grateful to Mr. Solomon for his continued support of the Center for Jewish Studies, since before its founding. Mr. Solomon played an important role with the Program for the Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies National Committee, which established the Center for Jewish Studies in 1978.

In December 1984, while a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers, Peter J. Solomon announced the establishment of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. The Friends of the CJS seeks to provide an ongoing base of support for the Center to enable it to expand its present areas of activity. This fund backs efforts in Jewish studies that include: student research and study, student-selected guest speakers, faculty research, donor outreach and more. We are grateful to Mr. Solomon for all his time and effort in this role over the years, which continues today. As Chair of the Friends of the CJS, he has signed numerous letters, many with personalized notes; attended and hosted meetings; provided the Center with essential guidance. Mr. Solomon even came recently as a guest speaker to Prof. Stern's classes to share his expertise on rare books.

Mr. Solomon is the Chairman and founder of PJ Solomon Company, a leading financial advisory firm which was one of the first independent investment banks. He and his family have established some very important funds to support Jewish studies at Harvard, particularly graduate fellowship funds. The Solomon family have been loyal supporters of Harvard beyond the Center, as well. Peter Solomon and his wife, Susan, recently donated their extensive collection of rare children's illustrations and books to Houghton Library, as well as generous funds to support a major renovation of the library. (See news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/01/a-new-vision-for-harvards-houghton-library/)

This Center would not be what it is without Peter Solomon's long-standing and continued efforts and vision. It is a pleasure to continue to work with Mr. Solomon; we are very thankful for all that he does, and has done, for us. Please join us in wishing Mr. Solomon a happy 80th birthday and many more years of health and happiness! ■



PETER J. SOLOMON



SAMUEL J. LISSNER

NEW FUND: LISSNER JEWISH RESEARCH, LANGUAGE AND HISTORY FUND

A generous gift from the Susan Zirkl z"l Memorial Charitable Foundation on behalf of Samuel J. Lissner and family has made possible the **Lissner Jewish Research, Language and History Fund**.

This fund was established in December 2018 to support:

- undergraduate and graduate students conducting research or supplemental study during summer or J-term (January)
- the modern Hebrew language program

The gift was initiated by **Samuel J. Lissner** '08. Mr. Lissner is grateful for opportunities available to him in the field of Jewish studies during his years at Harvard College, particularly his work with **Professor Jay M. Harris**, his summer research in Jewish studies (which was supported by a fellowship from the Center for Jewish Studies), and his study of modern Hebrew. We are very touched by this gesture of thanks and support, and this opportunity for Mr. Lissner to "pay it forward" to a new group of undergraduates at Harvard. ■



Become a Friend of the CJS



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PATRON:	\$100
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BENEFACTOR:	\$1,000



FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

In December 1984, Peter Solomon (AB '60, MBA '63) announced the establishment of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. The Friends of CJS seeks to provide an ongoing base of support for the Center and to enable it to expand its present areas of activity. Annual support from the Friends helps shape the future of Jewish Studies and sustains the Center as an influential, multifaceted enterprise at Harvard.

YOU ARE INVITED

Show your interest in Jewish Studies at Harvard by joining the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies in one of four categories listed in the box above.

Friends receive invitations to lectures, symposia and colloquia, copies of the newsletter, and selected publications published by the Center

If you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Friends, please notify the Center at (617-495-4326) or cjs@fas.harvard.edu, so that we may contact and acquaint them with the Center's mission

SOME OF THE PROJECTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS INCLUDE:

- student research projects (both undergraduate and graduate, school year and summer);
- graduate student fellowships;
- research-related expenses for visiting scholars;
- public lectures and class presentations by distinguished scholars;
- doctoral dissertation advising by specialized scholars from outside Harvard;
- group discussions of research in progress for faculty and students in Jewish studies at the Harvard Jewish Studies Workshop

HOW TO GIVE

ONLINE: To make a gift by credit card to the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University, please click **HERE** (<https://community.alumni.harvard.edu/give/16040850>) for Harvard University's online giving form and follow the instructions.

Click on "Select a School/Affiliate" and scroll to **UNIVERSITY** from the dropdown list. Then under "Select a Fund," choose **OTHER - Harvard University**. Under "Other Fund Name," enter **Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies** (or the name of another fund of your choice), **Center for Jewish Studies**.

GIFTS BY CHECK MAY BE MAILED TO:

**Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138**

Please make checks payable to "The President and Fellows of Harvard College" and include a note in the memo line of the check that this is for the "Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies" (or the name of the other fund of your choice).

NAMED FUNDS IN JEWISH STUDIES



Those pursuing Jewish studies at Harvard University may benefit from a number of funds established over the years. New funds are formed continuously; the following funds are currently supporting students and scholars in their pursuit for greater knowledge and achievement in this field. These also may support publications and events at the Center for Jewish Studies. For further information on establishing a named fund, or contributing to one, please contact our office.

NAMED STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS AND PRIZES IN JEWISH STUDIES

Mandell L. Berman Fellowship
Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund
Harry Edison Fund
Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
Leo Flax Fellowship
Goldhirsh-Yellin Foundation Fund for Undergraduate and Graduate Travel to Israel
Hertog Undergraduate Study Abroad Fund
Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Lissner Jewish Research, Language and History Fund
Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies
Aaron and Clara Rabinowitz Trust Fellowship
Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies
Sidney L. Solomon Fellowship
Sosland Family Fellowship
Harry and Cecile Starr Prizes in Jewish Studies
Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica Studies
Isadore Twersky Fellowship

NAMED TEACHING AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation Yiddish Language Instruction Fund
Joseph Engel Fund
Suzanne and Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman Fellowship Fund
Freud Research Fund in the Center for Jewish Studies
Isaac-Melech, Icla and Zelman Rykles Memorial Fund
Edwin Lichtig, Jr. Research and Teaching Fund
Esther Miller Endowed Fund for Yiddish Studies

Rohr Visiting Professorship in Modern Israel Studies
Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship
Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica Fund
Harry Starr Teaching and Research Fund
Alan M. Stroock Fund for Advanced Research in Judaica
Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative Research in Judaica
Selma and Lewis H. Weinstein Fund for Jewish Studies
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professorship

NAMED LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUNDS

Yigal Allon Memorial Fund
Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund
Alan and Elisabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund
Robert and Florence Dreben Lecture and Publication Fund
Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund
William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund
Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund
Estelle and Howard Rubin Fund
Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund
Harry A. Wolfson Publication Fund
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

OTHER NAMED FUNDS

Center for Jewish Studies Fund
Suzanne R. and Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman Endowed Fund for Jewish Studies
Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies
Josephine and Martin Gang Memorial Fund
Jeanette and Ludwig Goldschmidt Bequest for the Benefit of the Center for Jewish Studies
Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies

YANOFF-TAYLOR LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUND



DAVID SHYOVITZ

JOSEPH ENGEL FUND



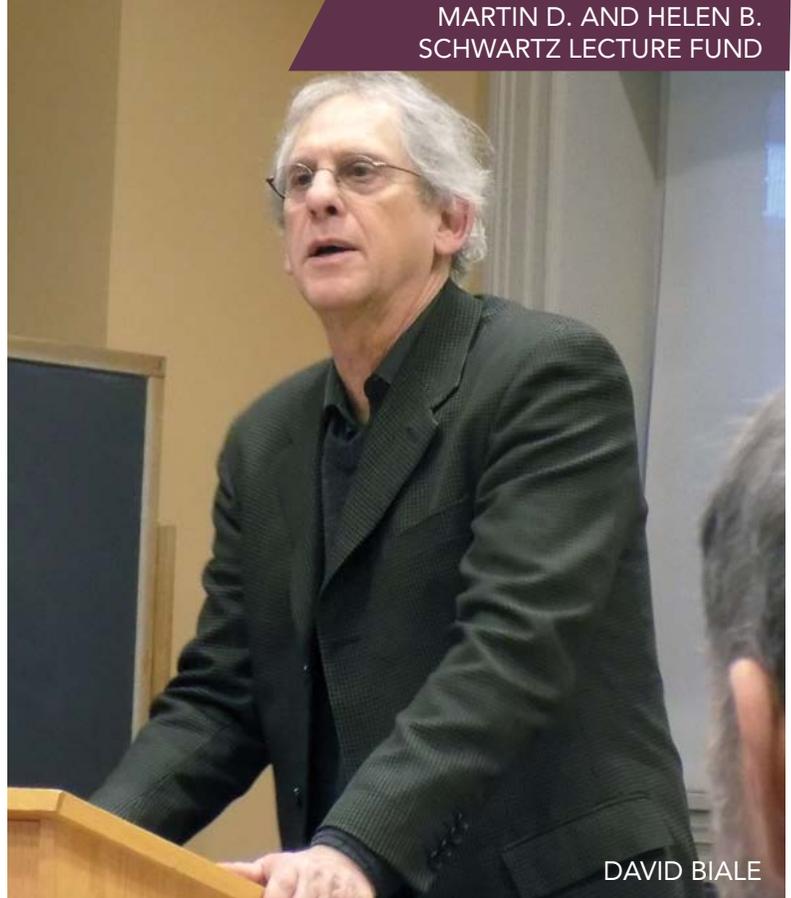
ANTHONY RUSSELL & DMITRI GASKIN

JOSEPH ENGEL FUND



BRITTA WALDSCHMIDT-NELSON

MARTIN D. AND HELEN B. SCHWARTZ LECTURE FUND



DAVID BIALE

JOSEPHINE AND MARTIN GANG MEMORIAL FUND



SAUL ZARITT, SHAYE COHEN, DAVID STERN

From the CJS Mailbox!



The Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies Fund at the Center for Jewish Studies generously funded my research last summer, both in Cambridge and in Jerusalem (in conjunction with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies).

In order to begin research on my senior thesis, which focuses on the portrayal of prophecy in Flavius' Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*, I needed to use the Harvard library resources. I also travelled to Israel to conduct additional research in Israel's National Library, where I hoped to find Hebrew-language scholarship. Despite being hampered by an unexpected foot injury, I was able to make some headway and find material on the depiction of Hebrew prophecy in works written in Greek. Erich Gruen's book *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* was particularly helpful in this regard, since he focuses part of his discussion on the apologetic elements of such works. Notably, he says that the Jewish play *Ezekiel* "expressed the powers of the Hebrew prophets in terms that applied to Greek seers" (p. 134). **This offers a Hellenizing interpretation of Moses that differs significantly from Josephus's depiction, and therefore provides evidence that Josephus chose the features of his Moses deliberately. I also turned up evidence of contemporary Jewish views of oracular knowledge, which constitutes important background information for my project.** In particular, I found an article written in Modern Hebrew by Betzelel Bar-Kokhva, "משולם היהודי, המנטיקה היוונית והקטיאוס איש אבדירה", which discusses mantic arts and the Jews in the writings of Hecataeus of Abdera. I think it is rather unlikely I would have happened upon an article of this sort without having found it in Israel's National Library. I am grateful to the CJS for enabling me to travel there and make significant progress on my senior thesis research.

— Theodore Motzkin
Harvard College '19

"By spending time in Israel and making these images, I was fortunate to have an experience that was both personally enriching and that pushed me into new terrain within my photographic practice."

— Sarah Perlmutter



Last summer, the generous support of the Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund allowed me to travel to Israel to take photos for a photography project on space and belonging in Israel. Our visual lexicon is saturated with images that claim to document Israel and the conflict there. Rather than trying to do the same, and with deference to my position as an outsider, I sought to make prominent in my images the experience of existing on the edge of understanding of and connection with Israel. My images focus largely on evidence of human interaction with the built and natural environment.

By spending time in Israel and making these images, I was fortunate to have an experience that was both personally enriching and that pushed me into new terrain within my photographic practice.

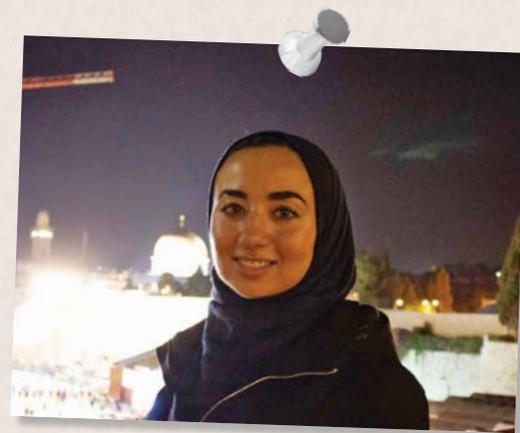
— Sarah Perlmutter
Harvard College, '19

Thanks to the generosity of the Harry Edison Fund at the Center for Jewish Studies, I was able to spend the summer at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Studying Hebrew in the Holy City is an incredible experience under normal circumstances, but as an Arab-American Muslim, this experience was even more extraordinary. On one hand, the Ulpan was one of the most academically challenging things I have ever done, but the questions I faced outside of the classroom were even more instructive.

My Ulpan classes were only a short light rail ride away from the Old City, and as my classmates and I explored the many layers of history, Jerusalem became more and more legible. It is a dizzying, confusing palimpsest, as contested as it is beautiful. One moment that stands out is walking with one of my Jewish friends through Mechane Yehuda, practicing our Spanish and Hebrew as we discussed the history of Andalusia. Of course, my time in Jerusalem was also marked by difficult moments—being questioned about my political allegiances near the entrances of holy sites was a near-daily occurrence.

And yet, **my presence in Jerusalem was not a matter of politics, but rather a matter of curiosity. Learning a language is, at its core, a desire to understand others.** My time in Jerusalem increased my understanding of a complicated city, but also increased my understanding of myself and proved to me that it is always worthwhile to follow my curiosity. I will be forever grateful for this incredible opportunity.

— **Hanaa Masalmeh**
Harvard College, (December) '18



“My time in Jerusalem increased my understanding of a complicated city, but also increased my understanding of myself, and proved to me that it is always worthwhile to follow my curiosity.”

— Hanaa Masalmeh



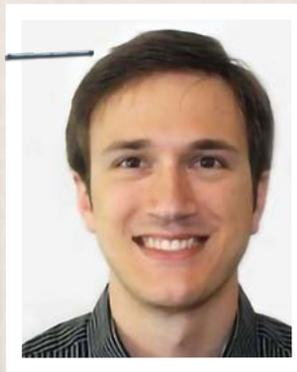
Last summer I participated in the Jerusalem Ulpan at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an opportunity made possible by the generous funding I received from the Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship and the Center for Jewish Studies. Although I have spent many years studying biblical Hebrew, I had not yet been able to dedicate any significant amount of time to the study of modern Hebrew. At The Hebrew University, I completed 100 academic hours of learning in modern Hebrew, complete with daily classroom instruction, field trips, and guest lectures. In addition to the invaluable classroom experience, the opportunity to live in Jerusalem and interact daily with other students and members of the community created an ideal environment in which to hone my skills in order to retain them after I returned to Harvard. As a result of this program, I am better equipped to read and translate rabbinic texts, and I have more access to important modern commentaries and resources.

— **Allison Hurst**
Ph.D. candidate, Committee on the Study of Religion

Over the summer I had the privilege of traveling to Israel, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany with the support of a summer research grant from the Suzanne R. and Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman Endowed Fund for Jewish Studies. I'm very passionate about Holocaust education and am writing a senior thesis on the topic of gentile complicity during the Holocaust. Through my trip, I was able to meet professors and visit museums and historical sites to conduct research and understand the history of Judaism on a more personal level. Without a doubt, this was the best experience of my Harvard career thus far.

I began my journey in Israel, touring Jerusalem and meeting with professors at the Van Leer Institute as well as Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. I appreciated the cultural exposure I gained in Israel, particularly being immersed in the vibrant present-day Jewish Israeli community. In Poland, I visited the POLIN Museum in Warsaw and the Jews of Galicia Museum in Krakow, which were both enriching and eye-opening to the history of Polish Jews long before the Holocaust. Exploring the Jewish district in Prague, which included multiple synagogues, a cemetery, and a Jewish art gallery, painted a vivid picture of European Jewish life and sparked my interest in examining cultural memory and preservation. Finally, I spent a few days at Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Sachsenhausen, which was incredibly challenging but made the entire experience much more raw and real. Overall, having the ability to create my own trip and dictate when and where to visit enhanced my studies far beyond the single dimension of history books. **I feel so fortunate to have been given the opportunity to pursue my interests outside of the scope of the Harvard curriculum and return with experiences and research to create something of my own.**

— **Emma Orcutt**
Harvard College '19



My dissertation looks closely at ingroup policing, when members of a social group condemn ingroup misbehavior toward another. These condemnations are important in situations of conflict because policing your side's behavior during a conflict can prevent unnecessary violence and aggression.

Unfortunately, we know little about the factors that determine the effectiveness of ingroup policing. My research seeks to fill this gap in our knowledge. I argue that ingroup policing is most effective when the arguments used to justify it are persuasive to other group members. **I look at the persuasiveness of two types of arguments: moral (condemnation based on values) and pragmatic (condemnation based on practical concerns). My dissertation looks at how Israeli Jews respond to these two types of arguments when they come from other Israeli Jewish citizens, activist groups, or military elites.**

During my time in Israel this summer, I completed research looking at each of these three groups, their influences and perspectives. At the citizen level, I ran a group-based experiment where almost 20 focus groups of 3-8 Israeli Jews discussed a controversial case of ingroup policing. An actor participated in the groups, and the position she took depended on the experimental assignment. I measured the reactions of other participants through a survey and transcription of the discussion. At the activist group level, I got in contact with the communications arm of several anti-occupation activist groups to interview their leaders about how they frame their public outreach. Lastly, I contacted former military elites and Israeli academics studying the military at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University. I am working through these contacts to conduct interviews to examine how military elites choose how to frame condemnations of misbehavior by members of the military. **Without the generous funding from the Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund fellowship at the Center for Jewish Studies, none of this would be possible, and I am extremely grateful.**

— **David Romney**
Ph.D. candidate, Department of Government



This summer, thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies fund, I had the opportunity to study *safrut*, or the Jewish scribal arts, with a scribe in Williamsburg, NY.

Many Jewish holy texts—including the most holy of all, a *sefer Torah*—are still written with a feather quill on animal parchment, in keeping with millenia-old tradition. This tradition is firm and comprehensive: the sketching of each letter is carefully outlined in Jewish legal codes, and no detail is overlooked, from the letter's proper height and width to its decorative "crown" to its barely visible flourish. A small mistake in a letter can invalidate the entire scroll and may only be corrected if Jewish law allows for it. For instance, errors in the writing of the Divine Name are often irreparable due to the holiness inherent in the Name. Such an intricate tradition leaves little room for artistic creativity, instead requiring painstaking care and a good deal of experience.

Over the course of the summer, the scribe taught me one letter at a time—saving the most difficult for last—and later taught me how to prepare a quill for writing. I studied the relevant legal guidelines on my own as we went. Once we had finished, I began work on my own scroll of *Megillat Esther* (the Book of Esther), a text read in synagogues on

the holiday of Purim. So far, I have written about four columns of sixteen, and I am hoping to finish the scroll over the next few months. Eventually, I hope to write other scrolls, perhaps ultimately working my way up to a *sefer Torah*—the *pièce de résistance* for any Jewish scribe.

Safrut is a niche skill, especially outside of Ultra-Orthodox communities. Growing up, I had always associated scribes with long beards and Chasidic garb, because those were the only scribes whom I had encountered. But this past summer brought the world of *safrut* to my own life and Jewish practice, and it has been a very meaningful experience to play my small part in the perpetuation of this obscure—and essential—Jewish tradition.

Before studying *safrut*, I had the privilege of spending three weeks at Yiddish Farm with the help of generous funding from the Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund. Yiddish Farm is a total Yiddish immersion program located on a farm in Goshen, NY. It combines full days of classroom study with opportunities to put the language to use: on the farm, in the kitchen, and in the bungalows. My father spoke Yiddish at home growing up, and I have long seen the language as a portal into both my own heritage as well as into relatively insular parts of the modern Jewish community. I picked up a great deal at the Farm—some of which I was able to put to use studying *safrut* in Williamsburg, and it has been wonderful to continue my Yiddish studies back at Harvard in a more conventional classroom setting.

This past summer gave me insights into Jewish worlds that had previously been closed off to me, and I am deeply grateful for these two formative and singular experiences.

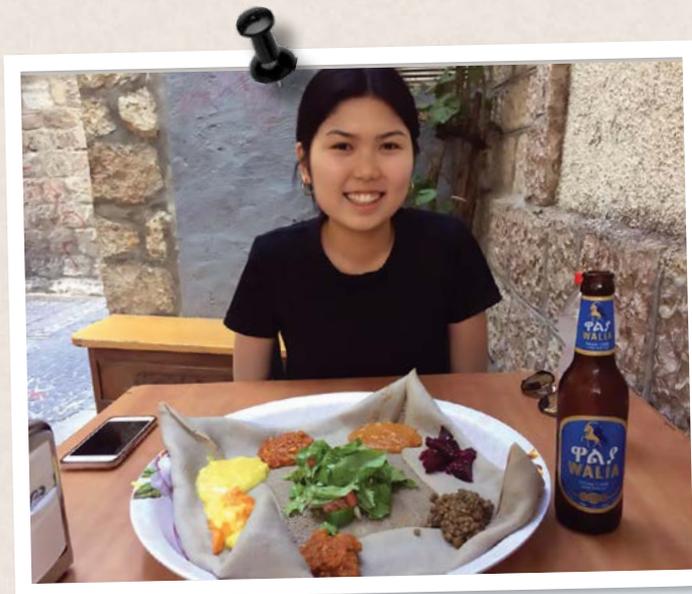
— Matt Jelen
Harvard College, '21

I am so grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies for awarding me the Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship to make my goal of traveling to Germany to do interfaith work a reality. With this funding, I was able to participate in *Bibelwoche*, a unique program held yearly since Vatican II in a monastery in Westphalia, Germany. There we studied and discussed biblical texts with an interfaith group of scholars, such as the Book of Jonah and Genesis 1 and 2. Because of this incredible experience I am already beginning to plan a return trip this coming summer, where I hope to be a discussion leader. Thank you for helping to open the important world of interfaith work to me!

— Rachel Slutsky

Ph.D. candidate, Committee on the Study of Religion





“During the two months I stayed in my favorite city, I—a Japanese international student who looks as foreign as one could imagine in the streets of Ben Yehuda and the corridors of the Knesset—studied the place of Arab-Israeli political parties under the Netanyahu cabinet.”

— Hana Seita

Over the past two years as a joint concentrator in Government and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, I have developed two distinct lenses through which to view the politics of the State of Israel. My studies in Government have enabled me to look at the technical specificities of the parliamentary system of the Knesset, while Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) has taught me to zoom out and take an anthropological view of the same topic. **It was only last summer in Jerusalem, where I conducted my research on the Jewish-Arab relations in the domestic politics of Israel with the generous aid of the Harry Edison Fund, that I was finally able to obtain a perfect *mélange* of these two academic lenses.**

During the two months I stayed in my favorite city, I, a Japanese international student who looks as foreign as one could imagine in the streets of Ben Yehuda and the corridors of the Knesset, studied the place of Arab-Israeli political parties under the Netanyahu cabinet. Despite my lack of Hebrew fluency (limited to *shalom*, *bevakasha*, and *slichá*), my Harvard affiliation helped to open doors. Thanks to the prestigious name of the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard, and faculty mentors Professors Jay Harris and Derek Penslar, I succeeded in receiving research support from the Knesset Archives to conduct over thirty interviews with lawyers of prominent legal organizations, such as the Association of Civil Rights in Israel; politicians of leading political parties of the coalition, such as Likud; and of the opposition, such as the Joint List.

Because I had received this incredible opportunity to conduct my own fieldwork, by the end of the summer I gained a more nuanced and complex insight into the development of a senior thesis topic. Though I am still in the stage of consolidating these findings, I hope to complete a thesis that truly captures an optimistic light on the future of politics and Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. I also hope to return to Jerusalem in the future. I am thankful for the warmth of Israeli hospitality, the efficiency of the Egged buses, Harvard University, and most importantly, the Center for Jewish Studies for their immense confidence in me and encouragement of my research.

— Hana Seita

Harvard College '19



STUDENT PROFILE: MIRIAM-SIMMA WALFISH

Ph.D. candidate in the Department
of Near Eastern Languages and
Civilizations

AM A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. After completing my dissertation, I hope to teach in a university in Jewish studies or Jewish education program, while at the same time contributing to the broader landscape of adult Jewish education in the broader Jewish community.

In some sense, I have known that my life's work is the study and teaching of rabbinic texts since first attending the Dri-

sha Summer High School Program in 1998. There were many things that made that first summer at Dri-sha inspiring and life-changing. But what initially got me hooked on a lifetime passion for studying and teaching rabbinic literature was the intensive, unmediated study of Talmud. It was exhilarating as a 16 year-old to dive into a text that I had never before studied, to parse the sentences, look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary, decipher on my own the line of argumentation, and later to compare my own readings with those of an experienced teacher. These summers ultimately set me on a course of intensive Talmud study during which I

“In my dissertation I combine an interest in education with a study of rabbinic culture. I attend to the points of conflict, tension, and blurring between parents and rabbis in their respective roles in transmitting knowledge to children and young adults.”

— *Miriam-Simma Walfish*

realized that the relevance of these texts to contemporary life and problems were best revealed through the insights of the Academy.

My program of study directly positions me to gain the skills, contexts, and connections which will enable me to succeed in academia. I chose to study at Harvard because of the world-class caliber both of the Jewish studies program and of the university as a whole. During my coursework and com-

prehensive exams, I took advantage of the university's resources, deepening my grasp of rabbinic literature and its historical contexts. I also broadened my knowledge of early Christianity, taking courses in Greek, the Letters of Paul, and the Gospel of Mary. These courses also

exposed me to feminist lenses in the study of late antiquity, lenses which I now employ in my own study of rabbinic texts. Another formative class was a study of comparative ancient law with Prof. Adriaan Lanni which focused on Greek and Roman law. Roman law especially provides a fruitful context for understanding some of the choices the rabbis make when

they discuss legal matters. The variety of tools I was exposed to at Harvard position me to be in conversation with scholars in a broad cross-section of disciplines.

In my dissertation, supervised by Prof. Shaye J.D. Cohen, I combine an interest in education with a study of rabbinic cul-

ture. In it, I attend to the points of conflict, tension, and blurring between parents and rabbis in their respective roles transmitting knowledge to children

and young adults. Earlier scholarship has claimed that the rabbis sought to fill the role of parents and to replace the home with the study house as a locus for the transmission of knowledge, and therefore as the center for cultural authority. I argue that despite this attempted shift from home to academy, the rabbis did not in fact reject the role of parents in this transmission.

Although my primary career objective is to become a professor at a university, I hope to continue contributing to the educational landscape of the Jewish community in whatever community

I live. In June of 2016, I received rabbinic ordination, and I am passionate about connecting laypeople with the insights of the academy in ways that are both meaningful and accessible. For example, I am currently turning my most innovative Harvard course, entitled “Death Penalty in Rabbinic Literature,” into an

online course for the Hadar Institute.

My teaching interests span generations and institutions. Currently, I direct Boston’s Teen Beit Midrash program,

“I am passionate about connecting laypeople with the insights of the academy ways that are both meaningful and accessible.”

— *Miriam-Simma Walfish*

which brings together a motivated group of high school students to study Talmud on a weekly basis. I am also teaching the Worship and Study community at Harvard Hillel a Me’ah course, entitled “Theology in the Talmud.” I have thus already begun developing into the scholar I would like to become—one who is deeply engaged in research and writing, while always remaining aware of how this research can enrich the lives of Jews in the broader community. ■

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES THAT WERE HELPFUL TO MIRIAM-SIMMA WALFISH AT HARVARD

MIRIAM-SIMMA PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED

the opportunity to work with P. Oktor Skjærvo, Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Emeritus, studying Zoroastrian sources and examining their influences on the Babylonian Talmud.

She also provided some more detail about her dissertation, “Rabbis, Parents, and the Dynamics of Cultural Transmission in the Babylonian Talmud,” for which she is currently drafting two chapters. The first of these chapters examines stories that problematize the dual identity of rabbi and father, and the tensions raised when a rabbi is also fulfilling the role of parent. One such story, for example, looks at how one rabbi prioritized studying Torah over teaching it to children.

The second of these chapters focuses on mothers, particularly incidents in which rabbis talk about their own mothers. “I found an interesting Midrash about Solomon’s mother tying him to a pole and beating him for being drunk. In the Talmud, he says that she was right to do this.” (In this version, she did not beat him.) The mother recounts

all the things she did to ensure his well-being, and her disappointment that, despite her efforts, now he’s a drunkard. [Because of his hangover,] he overslept on the morning of the dedication of the Temple!” The ways these sources handle this story sheds light on their views of “how the ideal mother should be.”

In another example, she examines “traces of maternal involvement in their sons’ lives.” For example, there is a story of a rabbi who quotes his mother 25 times as an authority on medicine, incantations, child development, and infant care. “Some have written about what this says about women’s knowledge. I am interested also in what this says about the relationships... between mothers and their children.”

In her own life, she balances all this work with her own busy family, three children (ages 10, 8 and 1 ½) and a husband “who does a lot of shuttling.” We wish her all the best as she completes her academic work here at Harvard and in the future. ■



STUDENT PROFILE: ISAIAH MICHALSKI

Accomplished German film actor, Michalski '21 studies the growing anti-Semitism in youth culture

ISAIAH MICHALSKI LIVED IN LONDON until he was five, when his family moved to Berlin. “Growing up as a Jew in Berlin, I always felt slightly estranged from my non-Jewish peers but never judged for my identity — until recently, that is. For Germans, last year was marked by the growth of anti-Semitic rap music and social media-fueled conspiracy theories. This frightening trend hit home when my younger brother, only 15 years old, was forced to leave his public school after weeks of violent anti-Jewish bullying.” The incident was covered by the press around the world. “It was this incident that sparked my interest in the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in youth culture.”

Named after Isaiah Berlin, who was an important philosopher and friend of his grandfather, Isaiah was prompted to study Jewish thought, and to explore the question of how Judaism fits into the “lens through which I view myself.” Isaiah’s grandparents were Holocaust survivors, and he was particularly moved by a tour he went on to follow his grandfather’s route of escape in Poland and Germany. “Seeing the hotels he hid in” during his escape was especially poignant, and brought this history alive. Where these stories of the impact of anti-Semitism once felt “far in the past, [they] now feel more urgent” and “have seeped into my personal life.”

In Germany, Isaiah is an accomplished film actor. He has had roles in several major motion pictures in the U.S., including *Anonymous*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Three Musketeers*. His

first big role was in a recent film in Germany, *The Silent Revolution*, which is still being shown around the world. It is based on the true story of a class of twelfth grade students in East Germany who staged two minutes of silence in memory of the victims of a recent 1956 Hungarian uprising and were then accused as “enemies of the state” and had to flee the country.

The film’s director actually cast Isaiah as one of the students after taking Isaiah under his wing as his mentor. Unbeknownst to Isaiah, he had cast this director’s niece in a play that he himself wrote and put on in a Berlin youth theater. Traveling in Europe last summer, Isaiah modestly admits how strange it felt to see ads for this movie featuring pictures of him posterized around

Budapest, and to be asked to sign autographs for fans at the film’s premiere.

With funding from the Center for Jewish Studies, Isaiah spent last summer “conducting qualitative research on anti-Jewish tendencies among European young people in five countries. My interviewees were enthusiastic about the timely project and came from many walks of life. They included Italian legal scholars, Hungarian Jewish youth program leaders, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), students, and many more.” Isaiah also visited a number of Jewish historical and religious sites in Hungary, France, and Italy. And he left with a very bleak image: “What I heard shocked and upset me—anecdotes of children who needed police protection after speaking

“Growing up as a Jew in Berlin, I always felt slightly estranged from my non-Jewish peers but never judged for my identity—until recently, that is.”

— Isaiah Michalski

out against neo-Nazism and areas of cities where it is advised against wearing a *kippah*. Since then, a number of larger surveys have confirmed my findings.”

Isaiah had similar experiences of his own. “Germany’s most important casting agent advised me to ‘use the Jewish Hollywood network’ to further my career [in the United States]. While these experiences were hurtful, they were no longer shocking. ... We who have come of age in the past years have experienced first-hand the loosening of social taboos which prevented much

of the kind of open anti-Semitism that is now prevalent in Europe. Thus ‘growing up’ and ‘becoming a victim of discrimination’ seem to go hand and hand.”

Balancing his work with film and studies at Harvard is not always easy. When *The Silent Revolution* premiered in Europe

last semester, Isaiah had to fly in and out of Berlin for events, and had to work out missing classes with his professors. While still in high school in Germany, he had to miss a good part of his senior spring for the filming of this movie. This risked his failing to meet the attendance requirement for graduation. He only had to travel across the Charles River to Boston for the US premiere in November. And he nearly had to schedule filming of his next project, cosponsored by the CJS, around fall term finals. Isaiah doesn’t act during the semester and plans auditions during school breaks.

Currently completing an independent study with Professor Joseph Koerner in the History of Art and Architecture, Isaiah is putting these interviews together into a film project. “I have designed a short film that will encapsulate this experience of ‘growing into oppression.’ The piece will explore themes of adolescence, pop culture, the progression of history, and the connection between Judaism and ‘whiteness’ to create a visual and auditory experience that will capture some of the complex emotions associated with becoming a young Jewish adult in an age of Trump, Corbyn, and Le Pen. The film will be about four minutes long and is designed both for online viewing and for installation.” Harvard’s Center for Jewish Studies, Hillel, and the Undergraduate Council at Harvard will be sponsoring this project.

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Isaiah is thrilled to be at Harvard. He has particularly enjoyed learning about Jewish life in the United States from his peers and exploring ways that “Jews fit into the culture in which they live.” Though his concentration is still undeclared, Isaiah knows that he “would like to do a creative thesis dealing with Jewish identity.” He has particularly enjoyed working with Prof. Koerner in the Department of History of Art and Architecture, whose father was a Jewish painter from Vienna who fled to the United States. He has also been very grateful for all the help that Prof.

Saul Zaritt, in the Departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and Comparative Literature, has given him, including very helpful feedback on a recent screenplay. He hopes to graduate in 2021, depending on what happens between now and then.

This semester, Isaiah directed a production of *Hamlet* at the Loeb Theater, his first full-length play. “This was an amazing experience,” shows were fully booked and the production won “wonderful reviews.” Next semester, he will direct a production of *Electra*. Aside from the theater and film world, Isaiah and a friend founded a Harvard undergraduate political consulting group that works with nongovernmental organizations and political campaigns around promoting tolerance. They connect students to work on websites and social media to gain experience and help these organizations. Their clients have included Human Rights Watch and the Resistance School, among others. Isaiah admits that he has had to learn a lot about the United States political structure and environment in this process.

What Isaiah appreciates most about being at Harvard is “feeling fully comfortable being Jewish.” In Germany, he finds “there is a lot of historical baggage, and I knew only about ten Jewish kids.” At Harvard, he appreciates being able to go to Hillel, finding a community for Rosh Hashanah and discussion groups after the Pittsburgh attack.

We look forward to seeing his own film production, which we are proud to support. Please look for more news about it in future newsletters! ■



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STUDENT WORKSHOPS

HEBREW BIBLE STUDENT WORKSHOP

by *Eric Jarrard, Th.D. Candidate in the Committee on the Study of World Religion*

Last fall, the Center for Jewish Studies and the Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund sponsored two lectures for the Harvard Hebrew Bible Workshop (HBW), a bi-weekly colloquium for visiting Bible scholars and graduate student research. With this funding, the HBW was able to invite **Yair Zakovitch**, Father Takeji Otsuki Professor of Bible, Emeritus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies (Fall 2018), and **Jordan Penkower**, Professor of Bible at Bar-Ilan University.

Prof. Zakovitch presented new research on the “Hidden Dictionary of the Bible” discussing, among other things, the phenomenon of names derived from biblical narrative. Prof. Penkower offered a presentation entitled: “The Oldest Complete Torah Scroll: How it Differs from Contemporary Scrolls,” in which he discussed unusual features of the Bologna Torah scroll (c. 12–13th century), focusing on various marginal corrections and notes and other noteworthy paleographic features. ■

JEWISH STUDIES STUDENT WORKSHOP

by *Rachel Slutsky, Ph.D. Candidate in the Committee on the Study of Religion and Caroline Kahlenberg, Ph.D. Candidate in History*

This fall the Jewish Studies Workshop, a graduate writing workshop, heard an amazing round of presentations. Paper topics included literary analyses of Talmudic texts, descriptions of Syrian Jewish experiences in Argentina, and studies of the Polish railway systems during the Holocaust. Students presented their journal article drafts, dissertation chapters, and conference presentations for feedback from the group. We also had a professional development training with **Shari Rabin**, a recent Ph.D. from Yale who is now an assistant professor at the College of Charleston. We are now looking ahead to what is shaping up to be a marvelous spring semester! The Jewish Studies Workshop is grateful to the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies for supporting our work. ■

The beauty of the book in all its forms



The “Eliot Indian Bible” was the first bible printed in America, in 1663. It was translated into the Algonquian language by the Massachusetts missionary John Eliot. (Photo by Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard Staff Photographer)

FOR THE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR “HARVARD’S GREATEST HITS,” DAVID STERN wanted his small group of 21st-century hyperconnected undergraduates to put down their tablets, smartphones, and laptops and to pick up a book.

The idea was simple: Get about a dozen first-year students in a room and have them study some of the rarest and oldest volumes at Houghton Library, Harvard’s vast repository of art, culture, history, and more. “I don’t think they ever imagined how spectacular and rich the physical book could be, and how it really changed their ideas of what a book was or is,” said Stern, Harvard’s Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and a professor of comparative literature.

Stern, who studies books as material objects, said too often students think “all a book does is convey a text.” But he insists a book’s physical form can impart a range of critical information. The way the words are displayed on the page, the illustrations, even the size of a particular volume, Stern said, can affect a book’s meaning or how it’s interpreted.

During the fall semester, students met separately in small groups to explore a specific work, and then reconvened as a

class at the library to discuss what they’d observed with help from Stern, visiting scholars, and library staff.

There were tactile highlights: They turned the pages of one of Harvard’s two copies of the Gutenberg Bible and created text on Houghton’s handpress. There were lectures on art: They studied the lush illuminated manuscripts and explored how illustrations in books throughout time have helped or hindered the meaning of their accompanying texts. There were history lessons: They looked at books as agents of change, such as the Luther Bible, and considered how they helped spread ideas around the globe. And there was the Bard: They investigated the types of textual changes that could be introduced into William Shakespeare’s work by printers, proofers, typesetters, and publishers by studying the source — Houghton’s 1623 First Folio.

Sometimes they found magic in the marginalia. In Herman Melville’s personal copy of Shakespeare’s works, next to a line of King Lear, the master storyteller scrawled “terrific” followed by an exclamation point. “This is the hand that wrote ‘Moby-Dick,’” said Stern with a laugh. For their final project students wrote a paper on a book of their choice.

—by Colleen Walsh, Harvard Staff Writer, for The Harvard Gazette
See full article at news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/03/at-harvards-houghton-library-the-beauty-of-the-book-in-all-its-forms/



COURSE LISTING 2018–2019

GENERAL EDUCATION

Societies of the World 35 — Conditional Equality: The Case of the Jews of Europe in Modern Times

FRESHMAN SEMINARS

Freshman Seminar 62J — Harvard's Greatest Hits: The Most Important, Rarest, and Most Valuable Books in Houghton Library

BIBLICAL/ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Ancient Near East 120A — Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1: Pentateuch and Former Prophets

Ancient Near East 209 — Biographies in the Hebrew Bible

Ancient Near East 210 — Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Seminar

Hebrew 204 — Reading the Song of Songs

Hebrew 218 — The Joseph Story and the Book of Esther

Hebrew 236 — The Song at the Sea: Seminar

Hebrew 256 — The Poetics of Biblical Composition: Foundational Principles of Hebrew Narrative Art

Religion 1232 — Ancient Jewish Wisdom Literature

CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

Comparative Literature 137 — Child Sacrifice, Pros and Cons: The Binding of Isaac in Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Modern Literature

Comparative Literature 193 — What's Love Got to Do with It; Love Poetry of the Middle Ages and Early Modernity

Comparative Literature 211 — Mysticism and Literature

Hebrew 153 — Critical Study of Midrash

Hebrew 159 — Studies in the Babylonian Talmud: Parents and Children

Hebrew 255 — The Passover Haggadah

Medieval Studies 250 — At Cross Purposes: The Crusades in Material Culture

Harvard Divinity School 4227 — Advanced Greek: Jewish-Christian Dialogues

Harvard Law School 2980 — Maimonides' Code "Mishneh Torah": Jewish Law and Legal Theory

MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

Comparative Literature 107 — The Politics of Yiddish

Comparative Literature 179 — Ghostwriters and Ventriloquists: Postwar Jewish American Culture

Hebrew 255 — The Passover Haggadah

History 1008 — The State of Israel in Comparative Perspective

Jewish Studies 111 — Modern Jewish Thought

Modern Hebrew 241R — Advanced Seminar in Modern Hebrew: Israeli Culture: Cinema & Literature

Religion 1255 — Selected Works of Twentieth Century Jewish Theology

Sociology 1118 — Migration in Israel and Comparative Context

Yiddish 118 — Yiddish Cinema

CLASSICAL (BIBLICAL AND MODERN), ARAMAIC, AND YIDDISH LANGUAGE

Classical Hebrew AA — Elementary Classical Hebrew I

Classical Hebrew AB — Elementary Classical Hebrew II

Classical Hebrew 120A — Intermediate Classical Hebrew I

Classical Hebrew 120B — Intermediate Classical Hebrew II

Classical Hebrew 130AR — Rapid Reading Classical Hebrew I

Classical Hebrew 130BR — Rapid Reading Classical Hebrew II

Modern Hebrew BA — Elementary Modern Hebrew I

Modern Hebrew BB — Elementary Modern Hebrew II

Modern Hebrew 120A — Intermediate Modern Hebrew I

Modern Hebrew 120B — Intermediate Modern Hebrew II

Modern Hebrew 130A — Advanced Modern Hebrew I

Modern Hebrew 130B — Advanced Modern Hebrew II

Aramaic A — Introduction to Biblical Aramaic

Aramaic B — Targumic Aramaic

Yiddish AA — Elementary Yiddish I

Yiddish AB — Elementary Yiddish II

Yiddish BA — Intermediate Yiddish I

Yiddish BB — Intermediate Yiddish II

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Advanced Topics in Jewish Law and Legal Theory

Maimonides' Code "Mishneh Torah": Jewish Law and Legal Theory

ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

Ancient Near East 103 — Ancient Lives

Culture and Belief 31 — Saints, Heretics, and Atheists: An Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

Ethical Reasoning 37 — Adam & Eve

Freshman Seminar 42N — From the Arab Spring to ISIS: National Security Challenges in the Mideast

Government 940F — Law and Politics in Multicultural Democracies

Religion 1316 — Spirit Possession and Exorcism in Early Christianity

Religion 2546 — Wo/men and Early Christian Beginnings: Revisiting In Memory of Her

Sociology 1120 — Human Rights in Israel and the United States

Harvard Divinity School 1202 — Introduction to the New Testament

Harvard Divinity School 3081 — God's Nations: Religion, Nationalism and Modernity



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