“Transmitting and transforming Jewish scholarship for over 40 years”
FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my honor to serve again as director of the Center for Jewish Studies and to welcome you to the 2019-2020 academic year. Since the last time I was director of the Center six years ago, I have seen the Center and its activities develop in exciting new directions, thanks to the inspiring leadership of our previous directors, Professors Riv-Ellen Prell and Leslie Morris, and to Dr. Natan Paradise, who will continue for the third year as Associate Director of the Center.

The Center and its many academic programs reflect the diverse field of research and teaching in Jewish Studies. Our affiliated faculty represent the wide array of subjects and disciplines that have enriched the study of Jewish culture, literature, language, history, politics, and religion, in diverse geographical settings from ancient times to the present. Our exciting programs and the courses that we teach offer to students, the university community, and the public many insights into the global significance of the Jewish experience, as well as a critical engagement with complex issues and debates in our society that Jewish Studies—with its exceptionally wide scope of subjects—is uniquely positioned to address.

I am very pleased to welcome new members of the Jewish Studies faculty: Shir Alon (Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) whose research focuses on modern Arabic and Hebrew literatures in a comparative framework, Natalie Belsky (History, University of Minnesota, Duluth), a specialist in Soviet and Eastern European Jewish history who was a visiting scholar at the Center in Fall 2018, and Mohsen Goudarzi (Classical and Near Eastern Studies, Religion), whose research focuses on the Qur’an and the emergence of Islam in the intellectual debates and social developments of Late Antiquity. Professor Goudarzi will be giving a lecture on “Judaism in the Qur’an” as part of the Center’s Community Lecture Series this year.

I invite you to read this magazine and to learn about the exciting programs, activities, research, teaching, and accomplishments of students and faculty over the past year. We are planning a very stimulating program for 2019-2020 and look forward to seeing you at the Community Lecture Series, colloquia and other events on campus, and to welcome students to our classes. Please visit our website, jwst.umn.edu, for news of the Center and information about upcoming events.

The Center for Jewish Studies is greatly enriched by the engagement of the campus and wider community with our many activities. On behalf of the Center, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the generous donors who have helped support and sustain our programs, enabled us to offer scholarships for student learning and research, and promoted our development as a leading and vibrant Center for Jewish Studies, now and in the future.

With best wishes,

Daniel J. Schroeter
Amos S. Deinard Memorial Chair in Jewish History
Professor, Department of History

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Cover image: Halfcircle stained glass window, 1927. Jacob “Jack” Liebenberg; Designer: Chester Weston. From the former Adath Jeshurun Congregation (now First Universalist Church). Image courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Mia). https://collections.artsmia.org/art/63072/half-circle-stained-glass-window-jacob-jack-liebenberg
Of the many lessons learned this past year, one stands out: there is a pressing need and demand for the education we provide in the Center for Jewish Studies. The shooting at Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh served as a tragic reminder of the complex and ongoing history of antisemitism in the U.S., the persistent connections between antisemitism and anti-immigrant sentiment, and the dangers posed by Holocaust deniers at a time when 66 percent of millennials cannot say what Auschwitz was, according to the Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study commissioned by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. Our courses, from “Introduction to Jewish History and Cultures” to a broad range of courses that devote attention to the Jewish experience as minorities within other cultures, such as “Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Middle Ages,” to courses about the Holocaust—including a new course, “The Holocaust in France: Literature, History, Testimony”—all give students the tools to articulate the long and complex history of antisemitism and its tropes.

“The Holocaust in France,” developed by Professor Bruno Chaouat, is not the only new course this year in our robust curriculum. Professor Patricia Ahearn-Blote offered a new course, “Sex, Murder & Bodily Discharges: Purity and Pollution in the Ancient World,” and Dr. Renana Schneller developed “Multiculturalism in Modern Israel: How Communities, Ideologies, and Identities Intersect.” The strong demand for our curriculum and the commitment of our faculty to providing it is evidenced by the fact that spring 2019 represented one of our largest offerings ever: eleven courses in addition to the multiple offerings in Modern and Biblical Hebrew through the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies. These offerings speak to the diversity of both our students and our faculty, promoting scholarship in history, biblical studies, Midrash, literature, cultural studies, gender studies, and more.

We are pleased to be able to supplement the academic scholarship of the Center with support for students, both undergraduate and graduate, in the form of financial scholarships (see “Jewish Studies Scholarship Winners” in this issue). We wish we could do more. Through a generous gift from the estate of Abe Franck, we have obtained seed money for a scholarship to support the study of Modern Hebrew in Israel. Abe loved Hebrew, so much so that in his retirement he took Hebrew classes at the U and studied extensively on his own. I have the book Abe used to learn Hebrew when he was a child, published in 1925 and covered with Hebrew phrases in a youthful hand, a book he kept his entire life. At the age of 100 he saw fit to make a contribution such that others could advance their knowledge of the Hebrew language and learn about the diversity of Israeli culture, society, and politics. If you would like to similarly support student learning, I invite you to contact me.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Natan Paradise
Associate Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies
On May 5-6, 2019, the Center for Jewish Studies hosted an international conference, “The Hyphenated-Jew,” organized by Daniel Schroeter (Professor, History) and Bruno Chaouat (Professor, French and Italian). The conference featured scholars working out of a diversity of disciplines, including cultural studies, history, literature, religious studies, and sociology, as well as a media artist. Similarly remarkable in its diversity was the breadth of geographies and distinct Jewish communities that conference presenters invoked in their presentations—Central and Eastern Europe, France, Germany, Islamic Iberia, Ottoman Palestine and Israel, and the United States—spanning historical contexts from the late medieval period until today. In addition to the presenters and members of the Center for Jewish Studies, the conference attracted faculty from other departments at the University of Minnesota, faculty from other local institutions, graduate and undergraduate students, and members of the general public.

The conference was convened, as Daniel Schroeter observed in his opening remarks, because “in thinking about the idea of the ‘hyphenated Jew’ and its many meanings, it becomes clear that it is at the very center of questions and debates about Jewish Studies as a field, about interdisciplinarity and interpretative boundaries, and our own relationships to the disciplines in which we work.” The hyphenated Jew, Schroeter noted, “emerges with emancipation, and the relationship of Jews to the nation state, the tensions produced as insiders/outiders, the fraught relationship of Judaism to Christianity, the position that immigrants occupy in their new country, and in the case of Jews, in relationship to other, older Jewish communities. The two sides of the hyphen co-exist in tension, raising questions of identity and dual loyalties, an anxiety that is ever present among Jews.”

Bruno Chaouat reminded attendees that in the 1980s Jean-François Lyotard “wrote a reflection on the hyphen that at once connects and separates the Christian from the Jew. For Lyotard, the hyphen was a coup de force that abrogates the Law. Or rather an Aufhebung, an overcoming or a sublating of the Jew. Lyotard contended that the hyphen, instead of being an enrichment, was a subtraction.” Indeed, there were presenters who argued vigorously that the hyphenated identity ultimately threatens the Jewish side of the term not only with subtraction, but with potential erasure. Yet Chaouat also posited in his remarks that “we may consider the hyphen as an ontological enrichment or addition—or, to put it differently, as a way in which the self, collective or individual, is opened by the other, and is thus not a selfsame but an altered self, a self-other.” And in fact, a nearly equal number of participants argued that the hyphen is frequently productive, indicating creative tension. Those scholars tended to base their analyses on the Islamic world and Israel, but also the United States—geographies and histories where Jewish identities have been less consistently under attack. Scholars of European Jewry and of Jews within a primarily Christian world were more likely to see the hyphen as tending toward a diminishment of the Jewish side of the term, inappropriately yoking things Jewish to an appropriating or threatening other.

As an interdisciplinary research center, The Center for Jewish Studies is committed to bringing together a diversity of voices and perspectives. The spirited debate at the conference accomplished that goal. As organizer Daniel Schroeter reflected afterwards, “The conference generated interesting discussion on a range of issues that, if anything, served to complicate our understanding of the ‘hyphenated Jew’ and its many meanings and contexts in different geographies and temporalities. What became clearer to me is the hyphenated Jew is an immensely important heuristic lens for understanding Jews as an ethnic and religious minority, or in the case of Israel, as a majority.”
Rena Fedorova Documents Soviet Holocaust Survivor Narratives

When senior Rena Fedorova (Political Science; minor in Jewish Studies) interviewed for an internship with (former CEO) Ted Flaum and others at Jewish Family Service of St. Paul, they immediately considered that her fluency in Russian and knowledge of Jewish history presented an opportunity to document the stories of Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors living in St. Paul. When Rena began meeting with survivors, however, she quickly discovered that many had never told their stories, in part because they did not think of themselves as “survivors” in the same sense as those who had survived the concentration camps and ghettos of the Nazis.

Rena observes, “Most accounts of the Holocaust and WWII focus on Nazi concentration camps, ghettos, and famous battles. However, there are lesser-known narratives of the Holocaust, of survivors who were refugees or in former Soviet nations.” Rena was guided in her interviews by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum definition of Holocaust survivor: “any persons, Jewish or non-Jewish, who were displaced, persecuted, or discriminated against due to the racial, religious, ethnic, social, and political policies of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. In addition to former inmates of concentration camps, ghettos, and prisons, this definition includes, among others, people who were refugees or were in hiding.” During her internship with Jewish Family Service, Rena discovered that a substantial local population of Holocaust survivors were in the Siege of Leningrad or were refugees in other parts of the former Soviet Union, and these survivors did not see their stories represented in mainstream depictions of the Shoah.

In conducting her interviews, Rena became committed to the principle that individual narratives matter. Following USHMM’s Oral History Interview Guidelines, which state that the aim of interviewing is not to “create conversation,” but rather “to listen,” Rena shaped her interviews “as a way to contextualize their narratives into a larger historical framework without stripping them of their individual accounts.” In doing so, Rena reports, “I have learned that although initially I believed that Soviet survivors of war-induced trauma would share collective frameworks of trauma, frameworks of trauma are often individualized with some collective overtones.”

For example, she explains, “Leningrad was transformed by the Siege and stood separate from the narratives surrounding other WWII survivors.” In conducting research in preparation for her interviews, Rena learned that “survivors of the Siege often may use their physical experiences to illustrate their emotional states.” When interviewing survivors of the Siege of Leningrad, she says, “details regarding hunger, starvation, and physical discomfort present themselves as a way to examine emotional trauma.” Thus Rena writes of an interview with one survivor of the Siege of Leningrad:

Not once did she describe her feelings during the time of the War; instead, her main focus was on food. Although she provided me with some details of her life prior to the War, and some after the War, most of her interview read like a food diary. She went into great detail about when they had food, what kind of food they had, when they didn’t have food, what they did to search for food, and when people she knew died of starvation. While she did appear somber and serious while telling her story, overall, she seemed to express little emotion and was very straightforward. I believe she used physical markers of food (or lack thereof) as a way to express her mental challenges during the War.

Unlike Siege survivors, whose narrowly focused narratives were acutely personal, refugees scattered across the Soviet landscape often had more investment in the nationally framed state of the war and in the success of the USSR; their ability to return home, after all, often depended on it. Rena reports, “While Siege survivors altered Soviet discourse to see their lives as an unfair sacrifice to the War, refugees … used Soviet discourse to explain their survival.”

(continued)
Avraham Shaver Interns at USHMM

As part of our participation in the CLA Career Readiness Initiative, the Center for Jewish Studies has been encouraging students to take steps—with our support—to ensure that when they graduate, they will have both a degree and professionalizing experience outside the classroom, as well as the ability to articulate for themselves, their families, and future employers how a liberal arts education prepares them for their future careers.

Senior Avraham Shaver (Jewish Studies and History) has identified for himself a long-term goal: he would love to work for Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem. In support of this goal, Avi decided to apply for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Internship Program. The internship program is highly competitive; only about 70 out of 500 applicants receive invitations to the program. We are delighted and proud that Avi was selected.

Since its dedication in 1993, more than 44 million people have visited USHMM. Approximately 24% of visitors are school children, and 90% of visitors are not Jewish. The Museum holds over 21,000 objects, averaging one collection per day. The Museum archives some 111.5 million pages of documents, with an additional 191.1 million digital images from the International Tracing Service. It curates more than 113,070 historical photographs and images, of which almost 34,140 are available on the Museum’s website, and more than 1,265 hours of archival film footage. To land an internship at USHMM, Avi reports, “I had to submit my cover letter which highlighted my interest in the Holocaust and related subject matter. I also had to submit a resume. I then had a phone interview.” In typically understated fashion, Avi notes, “the questions were challenging.”

As part of his summer 2019 internship at USHMM, Avi’s duties include helping people learn about the Holocaust by helping them find their way around the museum, answering questions about the museum and about the Holocaust, helping with tours, and orienting school groups. The internship is unpaid; to help support Avi, the Center for Jewish Studies and CLA Career Services have awarded him the Barbara D. and Lee Bearmon Internship Award in Jewish Ethics and Practice. In pursuit of his long-term goal, Avi says, “I hope to get out of this internship an understanding of how a museum works, as well as gain insight into how the public learns and engages with the Holocaust.”
Noam Sienna Publishes A Rainbow Thread

Noam Sienna (PhD candidate, History) takes the study of history seriously, understanding that what you see behind you shapes what you can imagine for yourself looking forward, and he approaches the primary texts that are a window into history as a treasure trove promising discovery. This classic understanding of the transformative potential of the liberal arts motivated Sienna to supplement his already busy schedule writing a dissertation on the making and reading of Jewish books in early modern North Africa (supervised by CJS Director Daniel Schroeter) with a second book-length project: compiling, editing, at times translating, and commenting upon over a hundred sources on the intersection of Jewish and queer identities.

His groundbreaking work, covering poetry, drama, literature, law, Midrash, and memoir, was published last February as A Rainbow Thread: An Anthology of Queer Jewish Texts From the First Century to 1969 (Philadelphia: Print-O-Craft Press, 2019). In his anthology, Sienna suggests that “Jewish texts are not just obstacles to be overcome in the creation of queer Jewish life, but also potential resources waiting to be excavated.” Sienna hopes his anthology will present a richer picture of how gender variance and diverse sexual desires and expressions have existed in Jewish history. As he notes of his sources, these excerpts—and the book as a whole—are not an attempt to show that Judaism “really” promotes queer inclusion, nor are they merely an anachronistic attempt to say “Look! There were [insert-identity-here] Jews in the past!” Instead, this project is intended to do something both deeper and more expansively imaginative: to push the reader to rethink what queer Judaism could be, and to encourage them to question what they have assumed about how Jews have understood sexuality and gender over our long history as a people.

Sienna chose to publish his anthology with a trade press rather than with an academic press because he wanted it to have a wider audience than just academics. Indeed, since the book’s publication he has been invited to give talks around the country to both academic and synagogue audiences. Nevertheless, Sienna definitely has an eye on the academic implications of his work: “Another thing that I hope this book does is help convince Jewish historians that they should always be paying attention to gender and sexuality.” In the final analysis, Sienna insists, “the intent of this book is to broaden the horizon of Jewish history—in terms of sexuality, gender, temporality, and location. I think people might be surprised to discover just how many areas of Jewish life can be enriched through the incorporation of these marginalized voices.”

Selim Rauer Awarded Post-Doc

Selim Rauer (PhD, French Studies) has been awarded the Felix Posen Fellowship for Post-Doctoral / Junior Faculty for the academic year 2019-2020, at The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA) at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Rauer’s dissertation, The Borders of Exile: Figures and Territories of Foreignness, was written under the supervision of Bruno Chaouat, who was himself a Visiting Scholar Fellow at SICSA in 2018; the dissertation reinterprets the notion of the border, in an era characterized by global market economies, as an expanding territory of estrangement and seclusion in the aftermath of colonialism and the Shoah. Rauer, who is a former stage director and dramaturg as well as the author of two poetry collections, a novel, a biographical essay, and several literary and academic articles, will use his time at SICSA to conduct research toward his next book-length project, titled “Constructs of Power without Domination.”
When Kathryn Huether (PhD candidate, Musicology) first visited the Treblinka Extermination Camp Memorial Site in Poland, she and her fellow visitors were invited to move through the site guided by a new mobile phone app, “AudioTrip.” The audio guide was created because Treblinka lacks its original infrastructure, which was destroyed by the Third Reich in 1943. Unlike at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the material signs of violence and trauma remain embedded in the landscape, providing visual evidence and context for those who have come to engage with the history of the Shoah, visitors to Treblinka see a forest meadow surrounded by pine trees. The barbed wire fence woven with pine boughs to hide the barbarous murders within no longer exists, and the mobile app substitutes a soundscape for the historical landscape that has been erased.

As a musicologist working in Holocaust studies with an MA in religious studies and a strong background in cultural studies, Huether was perhaps uniquely suited to ask key questions of the new audio guide. What are the implications, she wondered, when visitors to Treblinka are isolated by headphones, guided by the voice of a male narrator providing commentary and reading from survivor memoirs, all backed by a musical track that relies on motifs and film music techniques familiar to visitors from their experience watching movies? How is the visitor’s reception of Treblinka manipulated sonically and therefore affectively, and to what end? Is the app curating what Huether calls “a sonic specter” of Treblinka’s past?

Her initial analysis, which relies on her own experience as well as on interviews with other visitors and with one of the app’s curators, Professor Agnieska Haska, was published as “Did You Notice the Butterflies?: Behind the Headphones, Muted Memorializing and Curated Soundscapes at Treblinka,” in Reflections: Auschwitz Jewish Center Annual Alumni Journal (January 2018). Huether continues her investigation with the support of the U of M Graduate School’s prestigious 2019-2020 Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship for her project, “Guiding or Influencing?: Questioning Audioguides and their Accompanying Sonic Nuances at Holocaust Memorial Sites,” working with faculty mentor Prof. Leslie Morris (German, Nordic, Slavic, and Dutch) in affiliation with the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Advised by CJS faculty member and dissertation supervisor Karen Painter (School of Music), Huether is currently developing her argument that “the Treblinka audio guide conveys the memorial vision/agenda of the institutional curators rather than providing an opportunity for visitors to critically and objectively engage with the site and its complex history.” She argues, moreover, that the curated soundscape is connected “to Poland’s current political situation and its recent ‘Holocaust Law,’ elucidating how memory politics have shaped an audio guide.”

Huether has been invited to present her arguments, which come at a time when Holocaust memorialization (and museum memory in general) continues to shift away from traditional methods of representation to multi-media perspectives, at the special session of the Lessons and Legacies Conference, “The Holocaust and Europe: Research Trends, Pedagogical Approaches, and Political Challenges,” which will take place in Munich from November 4-7, 2019. There she will present her paper, “Guiding or Obscuring?: Questioning Treblinka’s Audio Guide and its Sonic Infrastructure,” which was accepted from among over 700 proposals. Huether travels to Munich with support from the Center for Jewish Studies, through the Theresa and Nathan Berman Graduate Fellowship in Jewish Studies.

As befits a future scholar-teacher, Huether also traveled to Duluth to share her research with students preparing to visit Poland as part of a new University of Minnesota Duluth Study Abroad Program, “Jews & Poles: Entangled Lives” (see article in this issue). And for summer 2019 she was awarded a Summer Graduate Student Research Fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where she continues her research while participating in weekly training seminars led by museum staff. The Center for Jewish Studies looks forward to Kathryn Huether’s future contributions where, as dissertation supervisor Karen Painter notes, “in a field that is still largely dominated by traditional archival research, the conceptual and interpretive dimensions of her approach to Holocaust studies are positioned to make a real mark on the discipline.”
Meyer Weinshel Teaches Community Yiddish Class

Meyer Weinshel (PhD candidate, Germanic Studies), having been encouraged by his advisor Leslie Morris to study Yiddish to satisfy the PhD second-language requirement, spent two summers in New York at YIVO and one in Vilna (where YIVO was first established in 1925), learning Yiddish and studying Yiddish-speaking cultures. Yiddish is now central to his research and dissertation, “Contiguities of Translation: German-Language Poetry and the Creation of Modern Jewish Culture in Habsburg Austria,” and he also discovered a personal connection to Yiddish while researching the YIVO archives, which chronicled a family history attached to six decades of Yiddish theater in Milwaukee.

With this background, Weinshel decided to spend several weekends from August 2018 to January 2019 at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA as part of their Yiddish Pedagogy Program. The purpose of the program, he reports, was to work with other language instructors mastering communicative language teaching, and to pilot In Eynem, the Center’s forthcoming Yiddish textbook. Weinshel subsequently reached out to Carin Mrotz at Jewish Community Action: “I wanted the proceeds from the course to benefit a secular Jewish organization, and Carin and others on staff were enthusiastic and supportive from the beginning.” Weinshel observes, “There are many in the Yiddish Pedagogy Program who are teaching in similar community settings across the country and world, who are also seeing increasing demand for Yiddish classes. Because we live in a large metro with a sizable Jewish population, I thought it would be a good idea to do the same.”

The result was a ten-week course which “introduces students to the living language of Yiddish and to the diverse, global culture of Yiddishland—the places and spaces inhabited by Yiddish speakers and their descendants for over a millennium.” Students learned the alef-beys (Yiddish alphabet) in both print and cursive, read and wrote shorter texts, conversed in Yiddish using basic vocabulary and grammar, and accessed relevant Yiddish cultural resources for the 21st century. The students who enrolled, Weinshel remarks, were remarkably diverse: “Some are undergraduate students, some are working professionals, and others are retirees. Some are religiously observant, while others are secular, and there are students that are not Jewish but are interested in Jewish Studies. Some were raised hearing Yiddish among their Hasidic relatives, grandparents, etc., and others in the class converted to Judaism and find Yiddish culture and language to be important subjects of study.”

As both a teacher and scholar, Weinshel insists that Yiddish language and culture should be made more accessible to those interested. Unfortunately, as he notes, those resources do not often exist outside the East and West Coast. And yet, Weinshel says,

Even a basic literacy in the language and in Eastern European Jewish culture can open up an entirely new world for students to pursue this subject on their own. For example, topics we cover in the class include Jewish labor history, life in the shtetl, Yiddish poetry as a response to the Holocaust, and Ashkenazi traditions like klezmer and cooking. This range of topics reflects the status of Yiddish as a daily vernacular for the majority of Ashkenazi Jews prior to the Holocaust. By learning Yiddish, students gain access to these Ashkenazi religious customs, cultural practices, etc. that were largely abandoned, forgotten, or destroyed. As such, Yiddish itself imparts a certain level of Jewish literacy that is important to me as an instructor and scholar of Jewish Studies.

Before WWII, there were between 11 and 13 million speakers of Yiddish. After the Shoah, fewer than 2 million remained. Today, there are about 250,000 Yiddish speakers in the U.S. and an equal number in Israel, with another 100,000 or so in the rest of the world. Weinshel wants people to know, “If there are others who wish to gain fluency or even a basic working knowledge of Yiddish, they by all means should. There are summer programs offered at locations around the world, and there is a growing number of course offerings available online where one can begin from scratch with the alef-beys. A basic but nevertheless robust introduction to the language is possible all the way up to a working proficiency in the language.”
Melissa Harl Sellew Retires, Honored by Festschrift

CJS faculty member Melissa Harl Sellew (Classical and Near Eastern Studies) retired at the end of spring 2019 after 35 years at the University of Minnesota. Sellew’s scholarship and courses on early Christianity were intimately tied to a knowledge of Jewish sources and Jewish communities from the late Second Temple period to late antiquity. Indeed, in her final year of teaching she offered a course on the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures which was widely used by Hellenistic Jews, and the Jewish scriptural source upon which early Christian texts generally relied.

In anticipation of her retirement, Melissa Harl Sellew was honored by a Festschrift that included essays on early Judaism: Envisioning God in the Humanities: Essays on Christianity, Judaism, and Ancient Religion in Honor of Melissa Harl Sellew, edited by Courtney J. P. Friesen (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018). A Festschrift is a volume of learned articles inspired by a scholar, usually presented at retirement or some other significant career anniversary, and often written by former students. Festschrift editor Friesen completed his PhD in Greek at the University of Minnesota with a dissertation that focused in part on Hellenistic Jewish authors, and his research was sponsored in part by funding from the Center for Jewish Studies.

The back cover of the Festschrift reads, “Just as Sellew has done throughout her career, so this volume invites us into the joy of exploring distant societies and, in so doing, into the fuller discovery of one’s own self.” We wish Melissa much joy during her retirement and many years of discovery.

Scholarship in Progress: Hanne Loeland Levinson

Hanne Loeland Levinson (Assistant Professor, Classical and Near Eastern Studies) is working on a book-length manuscript, Wishing for Death or Fighting for Life? Death Wishes in the Hebrew Bible. The book will provide the first full-length examination of death wish texts in the Hebrew Bible.

A “death wish text,” Loeland Levinson explains, is one in which a character utters in one form or another a wish to die; the death wish is a prominent literary motif in the Hebrew Bible. Rachel says to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die” (Genesis 30:1). When Moses can no longer stand the way God is treating him, he says, “If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once” (Numbers 11:15). When the prophet Elijah flees Jezebel, he complains to God, “It is enough now. Take away my life” (1 Kings 19: 4). Loeland Levinson notes that scholars in general “have presumed a close and exclusive tie between the wish to die and the wish to escape suffering,” and she acknowledges, “When I started working on this book my expectation was that death wishes in the Hebrew Bible were expressions of pain, desperation, and a real longing for death.” But as she delved into these texts and the seventeen biblical characters attached to them, Loeland Levinson discovered that many of these utterances are not made in the context of extreme suffering. Rather, she compares them (with the kind of reference that endears her to students in the classroom) to the frequent exclamations of Livia Soprano on the HBO series, The Sopranos: “Oh I wish the Lord would take me now.” Biblical death wishes, Loeland Levinson argues, “cannot all be collapsed into a wish to escape suffering, but rather serve a variety of rhetorical functions.” Her book is a study of those rhetorical functions.

In her book Loeland Levinson will show, for example, that in many cases the death wish is part of a negotiation strategy. She observes, “Rebecca, Rachel, Moses, and the people wandering in the desert all utter some kind of death wish, but they do not all want to die. They use the language of the death wish to add force to their arguments. Their death wishes are part of a rhetorical strategy to achieve certain things in life.” As such, Loeland Levinson suggests, biblical laments are part of an honest engagement with the trials of life, and through them the Hebrew Bible opens up what she deems a theologically important space for the “uncensored voice” both of suffering and of protest. Loeland Levinson concludes, “These narratives and therefore this book are not so much about death as about communication: it is about conversation, what the characters say and how they say it, and how they are received. The book is also about agency, autonomy, about gaining control of one’s life situation, and about negotiating power.”
Alejandro Baer (Associate Professor, Sociology; Stephen C. Feinstein Chair & Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies) chose to spend his sabbatical year at Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Madrid, where for the past ten years he has been a member of the research project, *El Pasado Bajo Tierra. Exhumaciones y Políticas de la Memoria* (The Past Under the Earth. Exhumations and Politics of Memory). The project, directed by Baer’s colleague at CSIC, Francisco Ferrándiz, responds to the increasing exhumations of mass graves linked to human rights violations, and which have become tools of truth, justice, and reparation. Baer and other members of the research team evaluate the sociological, anthropological, legal, political, and media impact of these exhumations on contemporary society, elucidating the different mechanisms that specific societies engage to face a traumatic past.

In addition to his association with this research project, Baer conducted his own independent research while a visiting scholar. He ended his sabbatical in Madrid by presenting a lecture titled, “Decolonizing Columbus? Spain and the Politics of Regret,” which in addition to reflecting on how Spain confronts the legacies of the epic consequences of Columbus’s voyage in 1492, engages with the Spanish expulsion of the Jews in that same year. Yet Baer’s voice during his year in Madrid extended far beyond the circle of his research colleagues at CSIC.

In addition to several academic publications, he published an op-ed in the Spanish daily newspaper, *El País*, “Efecto Trump y Antisémitismo” (“Trump Effect and Antisemitism”), an op-ed in *Tablet Magazine*, “The Rise of Spain’s Pro-Israel, Far-Right Party,” and three op-eds in the Israeli Spanish-language weekly, *Aurora*: “Genocidio: Crimen y Comunidad,” “Shoah, ¿Recordar para qué?” and “Vox: la extrema derecha pro-Israel.” He presented the keynote lecture, “Ramsey was our Hitler. The Holocaust and the Globalization of Traumatic Memory” at a symposium at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, Santiago de Chile. He delivered an invited lecture before the Argentinean Research Council in Buenos Aires for the joint session of the working groups on Memory Studies and Jewish Studies: “Healing Wounds or Perpetuating Divisions: The Paradoxes of Genocide Memorialization,” and he gave another invited lecture to the Barcelona City Council, “From Kristallnacht to Pittsburgh: Antisemitism as a Global Threat.” He gave two interviews at Radio Sefarad (Madrid) on the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht and on the 80th anniversary of the UN Genocide Convention, and another interview with Jewish Radio Jai (Buenos Aires) on the discussion sparked by a German official warning Jews against wearing a *kippah* in public due to rising antisemitism. Baer also presented a paper (co-authored with Yagmur Karakaya) on Holocaust memory politics in Spain and Turkey at the German Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Göttingen, and he co-organized a research workshop, “Studying Violence and Post-Conflict,” at the University of Bayreuth (Germany).

CLA Dean John Coleman has argued repeatedly that the work of the College of Liberal Arts does not end at the borders of our campus. Kudos to Alejandro Baer for representing the University of Minnesota, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Centers for Jewish Studies and Holocaust and Genocide Studies with his publically engaged and impressively global presence.
Renana Schneller Extends National Presence in Hebrew Language Pedagogy

Renana Schneller (Director of Hebrew Language Instruction, Classical and Near Eastern Studies) was invited in 2018 to teach graduate courses in the summer Hebrew language program of Middlebury Language Schools, one of the most prestigious institutions for language pedagogy in the United States. She continued at Middlebury in summer 2019, where she taught two courses in the Master of Arts program in teaching Hebrew as a second language: “Theories and Methodologies of Second Language Acquisition” and “Developing Assessment Tools.”

In addition to her leadership role preparing future teachers of Hebrew in the United States, Dr. Schneller has again been awarded the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation Grant for Less Commonly Taught Languages. In collaboration with colleagues Avital Feuer at the University of Maryland and Adi Raz at the University of Michigan, Schneller used the initial grant (administered by Michigan State University) to develop an advanced level Hebrew course to be shared with all the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). The course uses authentic media from Israel to teach content in Hebrew.

In the context of second-language courses, the term “authentic” is embedded within a pedagogy known as communicative language teaching, an approach to language teaching that emphasizes communicative interactions as both the means and the goal of study. Within this pedagogy, authentic materials are those that have not been designed for teaching purposes, but rather have been produced for native speakers for consumption in a native environment, and which are used in a classroom context to motivate learning by engaging with real-world situations of interest to the students. The advanced level Hebrew course funded by the initial grant focuses on “High Tech and Innovation in Israel.” The renewed grant will be used to develop three more courses, again using authentic media content from Israel. These courses will be about “Societies in Israel,” “Medicine, Religion, and Ethics in Israel,” and “Gender and Masculinity in Israel.”

Natalie Belsky Takes Students to Poland

This past May Session Natalie Belsky (Assistant Professor, History, University of Minnesota Duluth) and her colleague Dr. Deborah Petersen-Perlman inaugurated a new Study Abroad Program in Poland, sponsored by UMD. The program, “Jews & Poles: Entangled Lives,” enrolled six students from UMD and one from the Twin Cities Campus. Set against the background of the passage in 2018 of Poland’s “Holocaust Law,” which made it a criminal offense to accuse the Polish nation or the Polish state of complicity in Nazi crimes, the program featured a week of academic preparation on the UMD campus followed by two weeks in Poland. Guided and instructed by Dr. Belsky and Dr. Deborah Petersen-Perlman, students visited Warsaw, including the Warsaw Ghetto, and studied at Polin, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. There they explored the interrelationships between Poles and Jews over many centuries and learned of the friendships and animosities that developed over time. Students also traveled to Lodz and to Krakow, where they spent time in Kazimierz, a district of Krakow where Jews and Poles engaged with one another before the war and now again in the 21st century; they also visited Podgorze (the Krakow ghetto) and Schindler’s Factory.

Site visits to Treblinka and Auschwitz punctuated the students’ exploration of the above important locales of Jewish life in Poland. Dr. Belsky reports, “The students were really moved by our site visits to Auschwitz and Treblinka, thinking about how it is possible to commemorate sites of mass murder and how we (both as individuals and as a society) should relate to and conduct ourselves at these places.” She hopes that in future years the program will attract still more students who will benefit from the educational and reflective experiences afforded by direct witness in Poland. As she notes, “retracing the steps of the Polish Jewish community enabled program participants to peel away and examine the distinct layers of history embedded (often quite literally) in these spaces.”
The exhibit “A Campus Divided: Progressives, Anticommunists, Racism and Antisemitism at the University of Minnesota 1930-1942” (http://acampusdivided.umn.edu/) opened at Andersen Library in August of 2017 and closed the following January. In mid-September the website was launched. Both exhibits were supported by the Center for Jewish Studies. The exhibit told the story of student activism in the 1930s and featured many of the Jewish students who were involved both in efforts to integrate tax-payer funded student housing and in the movement for student rights and the freedom to demonstrate about global issues related to war. Their activism aroused the ire of people on and off campus, but they fundamentally changed the University of Minnesota.

Those students inspired a current generation of undergraduates to create a movement to call on the president and Board of Regents not only to change the names of buildings, but to create permanent exhibits on the campus that would recount the history of that period. President Kaler appointed two committees to consider these proposals. One, the “Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History,” consisted of eight faculty and two students who spent a semester engaged in research about Presidents Coffman and Coffy, Dean Edward Nicholson, and Comptroller William Middlebrook. You can read the task force report at https://cla.umn.edu/jewish-studies/news-events.

In March, the Board of Regents was asked to comment on the Task Force Report and raise questions prior to a May vote. Regrettably, the leadership of the Board appeared to be unaware that two of the twelve regents would use the entire hour to attack the veracity of the committee’s scholarship. No one from the Task Force was allowed to respond then or since. A special meeting was called in April and eleven of the twelve regents voted against “Un-Naming” buildings, but a strong defense of the report also passed by the majority of the regents. Debates about how to address the University’s history will resume in the fall when the new President, Joan Gabel, will take over the leadership.

Conflicts however, can inspire further research. I was not a member of the Task Force, but the original research I conducted for the exhibit remains critical to the fight over history. One of the attacks by a regent focused on the story of the School of Dental Hygiene. A month into the 1939 fall semester Lone Jackson, head of Dental Hygiene, invited three Jewish girls to meet with her. She advised them that no dentists, not even Jewish ones, would hire Jewish girls as hygienists and asked them to consider dropping out of the program because they would never be employed. The regent, in reviewing this history, objected that this did not constitute asking students to leave. Rather, they were given a “choice.”

We know about this incident because Sam Scheiner, who led the fledgling Jewish Council, took a deposition from Renee Rappoport, one of the students. She reported in great detail not only the conversation with Lone Jackson, but the responses of other faculty and the head of Dentistry, and the deposition recorded her frustration and humiliation at having to say “the work was too hard” in order to have her tuition returned.

Since Rappoport’s documentary statement failed to convince the regent of her experience of discrimination, I decided to dig further and follow up on leads provided by Laura Weber of the Minnesota Historical Society. The leaders of the Jewish community were alarmed enough by Ms. Rappoport’s conversation with the head of Dental Hygiene that they held a special meeting of the Jewish Council, attended by important leaders of the Jewish
community, including professors in the medical school and business leaders. The minutes of their meeting included the statement, “It was suggested that this committee attempt to straighten out Miss Jackson in her cold-blooded and blunt attack on matters of this kind.” A committee was charged to meet with President Guy Stanton Ford about the University’s responsibilities.1

The leaders of the Jewish community perceived the University as participating in the larger problem of discrimination in Minnesota. The weekly American Jewish World, on November 3, 1939, included an editorial by Rabbi David Aronson, “The Duty of the University.” It called on the University to stop discrimination by insisting that when individuals or organizations asked for hiring recommendations for employees, they be told they could not discriminate on the basis of origins. It exhorted the University to have its courses in Dentistry and other fields teach students to adhere to science and reject prejudice in hiring. The fact that Jewish community leaders were deeply upset with the University’s handling of these students’ dilemma is a major source of evidence that the Jewish community at the time did not believe these young women were given a “choice.” They rejected the University’s blaming others for discrimination and called on its leaders to lead, rather than accept antisemitism.

When regents and citizens suggest that the racism and antisemitism of the 1930s was the regrettable norm, they always overlook the objects of these attacks. Like every other period in history, this one was also contested and there was not a single point of view. The Jewish Council, the American Jewish World, and the Dental Hygiene students themselves remind us of the range of voices that we need to hear to understand the history of the University of Minnesota. They refused to be silenced, and we need to fight for them.

1 Minutes of Special Meeting JCRC Box 16, Folder, General Discrimination 1939. Minnesota Historical Society

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*We sincerely regret if anyone has been left off this list unintentionally. Please contact us if that is the case.*
Goldenberg Prize for Outstanding Essays in Jewish Studies
Nir Rotem, PhD candidate in Sociology. Paper title: The Other “Others”: Comparing and Relating Anti-Semitic and Anti-Muslim Views in America (co-authored with Joseph Gerteis)

Jonathan Paradise Modern Hebrew Study Prize
Benjamin Goffman, Management Information systems, minors in Jewish Studies, Computer Science, and Business Analytics

The Leo and Lillian Gross Scholarship in Jewish Studies
Elijah Hartman-Seeskin, Jewish Studies

Barbara D. and Lee Bearmon Internship Award in Jewish Ethics and Practice
Avraham Shaver, Jewish Studies and History

The Jerome L. Joss Graduate Student Research Grant
Noam Sienna, PhD candidate in History, in support of archival research on early modern Jewish books in the collections of Yale University, Yeshiva University, and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Theresa and Nathan Bearman Graduate Fellowship in Jewish Studies
Kathryn Huether, PhD candidate in Musicology, in support of her travel to Munich where she will give her presentation, “Guiding or Obscuring?: Questioning Treblinka’s Audio Guide and its Sonic Infrastructure,” at the 2019 Special Session of Lessons and Legacies.

Moritz Meutzner, PhD candidate in Germanic Studies, in support of his travel to DLA Marbach to use the Auerbach-Library as he completes the writing of his dissertation and presents at the DLA seminar.

Professor Riv-Ellen Prell Award for Research in the Study of Jewish Cultures
Meyer Weinshel, PhD candidate in Germanic Studies, to support his attendance at the German Studies Association Conference in Portland, Oregon in October 2019, where he will be participating in a seminar on Sondersprachen—“special languages” that deviate from a linguistic norm.

If you would like to contribute to any of these established scholarship funds or create a fund of your own, please contact Mary Hicks, 612-625-5541 or hicks002@umn.edu

Our faculty members come from a broad range of departments, and in any given year not all of their research and other activities necessarily relate to the field of Jewish Studies. We include here a sampling of faculty accomplishments that may be of interest to supporters of the Center for Jewish Studies.

**Patricia Ahearne-Kroll** (Assistant Professor, Classical and Near Eastern Studies) gave two presentations at the November 2018 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. “The Berenike Cult in the Canopus Decree and the Intersection of Egyptian and Ptolemaic Divine Worlds” was delivered at a joint session of the sections for Greco-Roman Religions and the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions; the paper is part of a larger book project she is working on. “Review of Arguing with Aseneth: Gentile Access to Israel’s "Living God" in Jewish Antiquity, by J. Hicks-Keeton (Oxford, 2018)” was delivered as part of a review panel at the joint session with the Pseudepigrapha and Jewish Christianity/Christian Judaism sections. Hicks-Keeton’s book relies heavily on Ahearne-Kroll’s own work on “Joseph and Aseneth.” This year Ahearne-Kroll introduced a new course, “Sex, Murder, and Bodily Discharges: Purity and Pollution in the Ancient World,” in addition to teaching “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” “Apocalypticism, Cosmic Warfare, and the Maccabees: Jewish Resistance in Antiquity” and Intermediate Biblical Hebrew II. Looking forward, Ahearne-Kroll has been invited to deliver the keynote address at the 2019 Heartland Graduate Student conference to be held at the University of Iowa in October 2019.

**Alejandro Baer** (Associate Professor, Sociology; Stephen C. Feinstein Chair & Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies) served as a Visiting Scholar at Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Madrid (see feature article, above). His many lectures and presentations this past year include a paper co-authored with Yagmur Karakaya on Holocaust memory politics in Spain and Turkey, delivered at the German Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Göttingen (October 2018), an invited lecture, “From Kristallnacht to Pittsburgh: Antisemitism as a Global Threat,” Barcelona City Council (November 2018), the keynote lecture, “Ramsey was our Hitler. The Holocaust and the Globalization of Traumatic Memory” at the Symposium “Ficción y Memorias del pasado reciente: una reflexión necesaria para su transmisión generacional,” Museum of Memory and Human Rights, Santiago de Chile (March 2019), an invited presentation, “Healing Wounds or Perpetuating Divisions: The Paradoxes of Genocide Memorialization,” at the Research Colloquium IDES-CONICET (Argentinean Research Council) in Buenos Aires (March 2019), and a co-organized research workshop, “Studying Violence and Post-Conflict,” at the University of Bayreuth (Germany). Baer also gave two interviews at Radio Sefarad (Madrid, November and December 2018) and an interview at Jewish Radio Jai (Buenos Aires, May 2019). His publications this past year include “Gedächtnis und Kässpätzle” in Kleines Al(e)phabet des Kommunkativen Konstructivismus, eds. Bernt Schnettler, René Tuma, et.al, (Wiesbaden: VS-Springer, 2019); a book review, “The Holocaust across Generations. Trauma and Its Inheritance among Descendants of Survivors,” in Contemporary Sociology 47(4); an interview with sociologist Chad Alan Goldberg on his recent book Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought in Raíces, Revista Judía de Cultura, nr 116, Fall 2018; and co-authored with Yagmur Karakaya, “Such Hatred Has Never Flourished on Our Soil: The Politics of Holocaust Memory in Turkey and Spain,” Sociological Forum (July 2019). He also has forthcoming, co-authored with Pedro Correa, “Spain and the Holocaust. Contested Past, Contested Present,” in The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Holocaust, ed. Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl (London: Wiley-Blackwell, fall 2019). Baer also published an op-ed in the Spanish daily newspaper El País, another in Tablet Magazine, and three op-eds in the Israeli Spanish weekly, Aurora.
Bruno Chaouat (Professor, French & Italian) served on the selection committee of the Conference on Contemporary Antisemitism at the University of Indiana (April 2019), where he also delivered a paper, “Who’s Afraid of Martin Heidegger?” At the Yale symposium, “Populism Then and Now,” he delivered a lecture entitled “Journey to the End of Populism: the Case of Louis-Ferdinand Céline” (March 2019), and he co-organized with Daniel Schroeter the University of Minnesota conference, “The Hyphenated-Jew” (May 2019, see feature article). On the New Books Network, Chaouat was interviewed by Daveeda Goldberg about his book, Is Theory Good for the Jews? French Thought and the Challenge of the New Antisemitism (Liverpool University Press, 2017). This year, Chaouat has forthcoming “Being and Jewishness: Levinas Reader of Sartre,” in Sartre, Jews and the Other: Rethinking Antisemitism, Race and Gender, eds. Manuela Consonni and Vivian Liska (De Gruyter, October 2019), and he has been invited to contribute an essay to a planned new volume sponsored by Cambridge University Press, The Cambridge Companion to Antisemitism, edited by Steven T. Katz. This past year Chaouat taught “The Holocaust in France: Literature, History, Testimony.”

Michelle Hamilton (Professor, Spanish & Portuguese) extended her teaching beyond the University of Minnesota campus by teaching a course for the St. Thomas Selim Center for Lifelong Learning (a learning resource for persons age 40 and older). Her class, “Al-Andalus: the Example of Medieval Islamic Spain,” explored how Muslims, Christians and Jews coexisted for centuries in medieval Spain and the culture that such coexistence produced. Hamilton published an article about the 15th-century Spanish transmission of Maimonides in the work of a later converso author, “Para construir la verdad: La lógica como nexo entre la tradición judeoárabe y la Visión deleytable,” in Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía número 35.3 (2018): 617–29. Her article, “Food and Death: Foodways and Communities in the Danza general de la muerte” (co-authored with Spanish scholar María Morrás and detailing how an anonymous 15th-century Jewish author presented food as a mode of cultural identity) appeared in Forging Communities: Food and Representation in Medieval and Early Modern Southwestern Europe (Univ. of Arkansas Press, 2018); this collection has been named an American Society for Food Studies Book Award winner. In addition, Hamilton co-edited with David Wacks The Study of Al-Andalus: The Scholarship and Legacy of James T. Monroe, ILEX Series 19 (Harvard University Press, 2018).

Bibliography of Deuteronomy (AnaBiDeut), an analytical, annotated, searchable internet bibliography on scholarship for the book of Deuteronomy. This past year Levinson taught Intermediate Biblical Hebrew, the graduate seminar, “Scripture and Interpretation,” and Advanced Classical Hebrew.

Hanne Loeland Levinson (Assistant Professor, Classical and Near Eastern Studies) is completing her book manuscript, Wishing for Death or Fighting for Life? Death Wishes in the Hebrew Bible (see Scholarship in Progress feature). In addition, she published an invited article, “Va-yera [He appeared]” in From Forbidden Fruit to Milk and Honey: A Commentary on Food in the Torah, ed. Diana Lipton (Urim Publications, 2018). As part of her outreach to the broader community, Levinson gave a public talk at Beth Jacob Congregation on the story of Noah (Oct. 2018) and another public lecture at St John’s Episcopal Church in St Paul: “Praying for Death: Death-Wishes in the Hebrew Bible” (March 2019). Levinson also supervised an undergraduate Capstone Project, “Understanding Eve through Translation.” This past year Levinson taught “Bible: Context and Interpretation,” “Death and the Afterlife in the Ancient World,” “Women, Gender, & the Hebrew Bible,” and a graduate seminar on “Metaphor and Gender in Ancient Mediterranean Religion.”

Rick McCormick (Professor, Department of German, Nordic, Slavic, and Dutch) was awarded a grant from the University of Minnesota Imagine Fund for the Arts and Humanities to support his research project: Sex, Politics, and Comedy: The Transnational Jewish Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch—From Berlin to Hollywood. The resulting book of the same title is now under contract with Indiana University Press as part of their series on German-Jewish Cultures (forthcoming 2020). McCormick also has encyclopedia entries on Ernst Lubitsch under contract for A Critical Filmography of German Cinema to 1945, eds. Todd Heidt & Todd Herzog (Montreal: Caboose Books). McCormick delivered a paper, “They Loved LA—but.... Critique of Hollywood/California/America in Films by Ernst Lubitsch and Billy Wilder,” at the conference “German Art in SOCAL in German Art: Artists and Thinkers from Germany and Austria in and on California” at California State University, Long Beach (November 2018), and he gave an invited lecture, “Diary of a Lost Girl: Louise Brooks from Kansas to New York, from Hollywood to Berlin—and Back Again,” at the conference, “Spotlighting Louise Brooks: From the Kansas Prairie to the German Silver Screen” (Kansas State University, February 2019). In addition, as part of his community outreach, McCormick introduced the CJS Community Lecture Series speaker, Noah Isenberg, at the showing of Casablanca at the Heights Cinema, October 15, 2018. He also led the discussion after the screening of the Israeli-Austrian co-production, The Testament, at the Twin Cities Jewish Film Festival, Showplace Icon Movie Theater, St. Louis Park, October 21, 2018.

Leslie Morris (Professor, Department of German, Nordic, Slavic, and Dutch) was a roundtable presenter on the topic, “Imagining the Future of German Jewish Studies at the MLA,” at the German Studies Association Conference in Pittsburgh (September 2018), where she also organized and chaired the seminar, “Private Matters: Expanding the Margins of the Lebenslauf.” She was also the chair and organizer of “Probing the Limits of Holocaust Memoir” at the Holocaust Educational Foundation Annual Lessons and Legacies of the Holocaust conference, held at Washington University in St. Louis (November 2018). At the Association for Jewish Studies 50th Annual Conference in Boston, Morris was the chair and organizer of “The Politics of Writing the Self into Jewish Studies” as well as the chair of “Teaching the Holocaust in the Age of Trump” (December 2018). She was invited to teach a “Blockseminar” at Comenius University, “Global Issues in Education: Teaching the Holocaust,” Bratislava, Slovakia (February 2019). Morris also delivered the keynote address, “German Jewish Studies Terminable and Interminable,” at the bi-annual Workshop in German Jewish Studies, University of Notre Dame (February 2019) and gave an invited lecture, “German Jewish lengevitch: Experiments in Writing,” at the Symposium in Memory of Professor Jonathan Hess, University of North Carolina (April 2019). In addition to her academic talks, Morris delivered a public lecture, “Remembering Kristallnacht: Jewish Life in Germany Today,” at the Roseville Public Library “Tuesday with a Scholar” series (November 2018), and she spoke on “Antisemitism after Pittsburgh” at the Interfaith Dinner sponsored by the Episcopal Church, South Metro Muslim Society, and Beth Jacob Congregation (December 5, 2018). Morris also served on the advisory committee for the Concordia Language Village “Waldsee’ camp in summer 2018, advising Concordia Language Village on the history of Waldsee camp; researching the
history of Waldsee, and making recommendations for a name change. In addition, Morris served on the University of Minnesota Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History (see article by Riv-Ellen Prell, “The Unfolding Story of ‘A Campus Divided’”). Morris received a grant from the University of Minnesota Imagine Fund for the Arts and Humanities for her project, She Did Not Speak; “She Did Not Speak” was published in the Georgia Review volume LXXII, number 4 (Fall/Winter, 2018): 877-896. She also published her latest book, The Translated Jew: German Jewish Writing Outside the Margins (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018). Morris is the guest editor of a special issue on “Czernowitz” in Austrian Studies Journal (forthcoming fall 2019).


Renana Schneller (Director of Hebrew Language Instruction, Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies) was awarded an Andrew M. Mellon Foundation Grant for Less Commonly Taught Languages to develop advanced level Hebrew courses in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Maryland and at the University of Michigan, to be shared with all the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). This grant has been renewed for an additional year, in which Schneller will develop three more courses. In addition, Schneller is for the second year teaching graduate level courses in Hebrew language pedagogy in the summer Hebrew language program of Middlebury Language Schools. This past year she also developed a new course at the University of Minnesota, “Multiculturalism in Modern Israel: How Communities, Ideologies, and Identities Intersect,” in addition to teaching beginning, intermediate, and advanced Modern Hebrew.
WELCOME NEW CJS FACULTY

Shir Alon (Assistant Professor, Asian & Middle Eastern Studies) joins the faculty of the University of Minnesota in fall 2019. Dr. Alon earned her PhD in Comparative Literature from UCLA, where she wrote a dissertation titled Against the Flow: Impassive Modernism in Arabic and Hebrew Literatures. Her research focuses on modern Arabic and Hebrew literatures in a comparative framework; she is currently adapting her dissertation into a book tentatively titled “Present Tense: Modern Middle Eastern Literatures and the Problem of the Present,” which examines how parallel narratives of revival in modern Arabic and Hebrew literary cultures shaped new and experimental narrative forms in the first half of the 20th century. Dr. Alon is interested in the way Jewish identity is articulated in and in relation to Middle Eastern contexts, in the legacies of orientalism in modern Hebrew culture, Judaism and decolonial theory, gender dynamics in scholarship on Arab-Jewish identity, and contemporary Palestinian culture.

Natalie Belsky (Assistant Professor, History, University of Minnesota Duluth) was a 2018-2019 Visiting Scholar in the Center for Jewish Studies. We are now pleased to welcome her as a regular member of our faculty, and the first such member from a U of M coordinate campus. Dr. Belsky received her doctorate in Russian history from the University of Chicago in 2014. Her current project focuses on internal population displacement in the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Dr. Belsky’s research interests include migration, minority politics in the USSR, Soviet citizenship, and East European Jewish history, and she has conducted research in Russia, Kazakhstan, Israel, and the United States. Dr. Belsky has taught courses on modern Europe, Russian history, modern Jewish history and world history, and she is a founding faculty member of the UMD study abroad program, “Jews & Poles: Entangled Lives.”

Mohsen Goudarzi (Assistant Professor, Classical and Near Eastern Studies) joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota in fall 2018 after earning a PhD in the Study of Religion at Harvard, where he wrote a dissertation titled, The Second Coming of the Book: Rethinking Qur’anic Scripturology and Prophethood. Dr. Goudarzi’s research focuses on early Islamic history, and he is particularly interested in the ways in which the Qur’an and other texts produced by early Muslims respond to the intellectual debates and social developments of Late Antiquity. This research involves substantive engagement with the Hebrew Bible as well as the Jewish writings produced in the Second Temple, tannaitic, and amoraic periods. By exploring the Islamic adoptions and adaptations of biblical and post-biblical ideas, his research elucidates the reception history of themes, motifs, and narratives first formulated within the Israelite and Jewish traditions.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

College of Liberal Arts
251 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
jwst@umn.edu
612-624-4914

Staff
Daniel Schroeter, Professor and Director
Natan Paradise, Associate Director & Director of Undergraduate Studies
Marial Coulter, Outreach Coordinator

Newsletter Credits
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