

# Jewish Studies at Rutgers

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The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life • Department of Jewish Studies

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ARTWORK BY ILANA SHAFIR

## International Conference Explores Role of Testimonies

More than fifty scholars from around the world came to Rutgers in March to participate in the conference “**Testimonies, Personal Narratives, and Alternative Tellings**,” sponsored by the **Bildner Center** with support from the **Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences**. Representing a wide range of academic disciplines, these scholars examined the diversity of testimonial narratives and the broader, more complex understanding of “witnessing” that has developed in large part in response to the Holocaust, but also in reaction to other events involving genocide, extreme forms of violence, or violations of human rights. The conference was held in conjunction with Rutgers’ new access to the **USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s Visual History Archive (VHA)**.

**Christopher Browning**, the Frank Porter Graham Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, gave the keynote



Professors Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer deliver the opening lecture at the conference.

lecture, “Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Case of the Starachowice Factory Slave Labor Camps.” Open to the public, Browning’s talk was the Bildner Center’s **Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program**, funded by **Leon and Toby Cooperman**. Browning’s award-winning book on the Nazi slave-labor camps was the first scholarly work that drew primarily on testimonies in the VHA.

**For more on other VHA initiatives and the conference, see pages 6–7.**

## New Master’s Degree in Jewish Studies

The Department of Jewish Studies inaugurated its new M.A. program in response to a growing demand for opportunities to specialize in the field.

Offering an interdisciplinary approach, the program draws on the strength of Rutgers’ faculty in Jewish history and literature, the Bible, cultural and religious studies, Yiddish, and Israel studies. Students will gain a sophisticated understanding of the development of Jewish life from the biblical era to the present and will be exposed to a broad range of methodologies.

The M.A. in Jewish studies will prepare students for doctoral-level work in the discipline or careers in related areas. Students, particularly educators and professionals already engaged in Jewish communal fields, may pursue the M.A. part-time.

The department’s undergraduate and master’s degree programs in Jewish studies are the only ones offered in New Jersey. The degree was established in part by an award from the **Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences Entrepreneurial Program**.

## From the Director's Desk



Creating a strong academic presence on campus and an extensive educational program for the public has been a challenging, yet highly rewarding, experience at the Bildner Center. This year's public programs, such as Christopher Browning's lecture, the panel "Cartooning Jewish New York," and our annual Jewish film festival, were attended by packed audiences. An international conference brought together a multidisciplinary group of scholars to explore the evolving nature of testimonial narratives in the post-Holocaust era. The highly stimulating exchange among participants was the culmination of the year's exploration of this theme in conjunction with Rutgers' new online access to the USC Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History Archive.

Israel-related lectures and events are an important part of the Bildner Center's educational programming and extracurricular offerings for students. The study of Israel is also an important area within the Jewish studies curriculum. Rutgers students are offered a plethora of opportunities to expand their knowledge about the history of Israeli society and various facets of its political, religious, and cultural life from an academic perspective.

A wide range of courses on Israel, including seminars by Bildner Center visiting scholars, are cross-listed by the Department of Jewish Studies, the Department of History, and the Middle Eastern Studies Program. This past year alone, students were able to take courses including "Israeli Culture," "Israeli Politics," "Kibbutz in History, Literature and Film," "Community and Identity in Modern Israel," "Zionism: Idea and Ideology," and "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," as well as courses in Hebrew language and literature. In many of these courses, students of diverse backgrounds and religious affiliations study, side by side, the complexities of historical processes and present realities. In the "Arab-Israeli Conflict" course, taught by Muli Peleg, the Schusterman Visiting Scholar in Israel Studies, students obtained firsthand experience in representing different points of view during simulated Middle East peace negotiations.

Last year, there were a number of reported incidents of bias on the Rutgers–New Brunswick campus. In the spirit of promoting dialogue and tolerance, the Bildner Center and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, together with the Department of Jewish Studies and the Middle Eastern Studies Program, will cosponsor a panel this fall on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and the role of the media.

In this program, as in others, the Bildner Center strives to advance scholarly exchange, build bridges, and reduce prejudice. These values have always been at the core of the Center's educational mission, and we hope that our programs will establish them as our legacy for future generations.

—Yael Zerubavel, Bildner Center director

## From the Chair's Desk



We had a particularly dynamic year in the Department of Jewish Studies. We received full state approval for a 30-credit master's degree in Jewish studies, the only program of its kind in New Jersey. We anticipate our incoming classes to be composed of diverse types of students: college graduates seeking to deepen their knowledge of Jewish studies in order to apply to Ph.D. programs, Jewish professionals interested in career growth, and energetic retirees eager to return to school.

In support of the new degree, Jewish studies was one of four academic departments to win a grant from the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences Entrepreneurial Program to innovate intellectually creative and financially self-sufficient programs. With this support, we were able to launch a major advertising campaign, in print, digital, and web forms, which attracted our first cohort of students for fall 2011. The master's program joins our certificate in Jewish studies, a four-course program that supplements either Ph.D. or professional training in other graduate programs on the New Brunswick campus, such as social work and education.

Our ability to run a master's program without jeopardizing the integrity of our undergraduate program has been bolstered by the newest addition to our faculty, Dr. Jonathan Gribetz, who joins the department in fall 2011. Trained at Harvard College and Columbia University, and most recently the Ray D. Wolfe Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto's Centre for Jewish Studies, Gribetz specializes in the history of the Jews in the Islamic world, with a focus on late Ottoman Palestine. Jointly appointed in Jewish studies and history, Gribetz will teach four courses next year, including "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," "The Jews in Islam," "Jerusalem Contested: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives," and "Jewish Society and Culture II." (See p. 3.)

Other faculty news includes our successful recruitment of an American Council of Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow, Dr. Sara Jessica Milstein, a recent Ph.D. from New York University, who specializes in the literary history of the ancient Near East. (See p. 9.)

Another departmental initiative was the creation of a new minor to encompass our many offerings in biblical and rabbinic language, literature, and culture. Rutgers students can now minor in the language and culture of ancient Israel, in addition to Jewish studies and modern Hebrew, opening new avenues for engagement in the field of Jewish studies.

Bringing the department to this next phase of its development has been a challenging, gratifying, and exciting process.

—Nancy Sinkoff, department chair

## JEWISH STUDIES FACULTY

### Core Faculty

Nancy Sinkoff,  
*department chair*  
Jonathan Gribetz  
Gary A. Rendsburg  
Jeffrey Shandler  
Paola Tartakoff\*  
Azzan Yadin-Israel  
Yael Zerubavel,  
*Bildner Center director*

\* *vice chair of  
undergraduate studies*

### Associated Faculty

Maurice J. Elias  
Leslie Fishbein  
Ziva Galili  
Judith Gerson  
David Greenberg  
Douglas Greenberg  
Paul Hanebrink  
Martha Helfer  
Michael G. Levine  
Phyllis Mack  
Barbara Reed  
Emma Wasserman

### Visiting Scholars

Israel Bartal  
Anna B. Manchin  
Sara Jessica Milstein

### Instructor

Hilit Surowitz-Israel

### Part-time Lecturers

Zachary Mann  
Jonathan Mendilow  
Mordecai Schwartz  
Ute Steyer

### Language Instructors

Orly Moshenberg, *Hebrew-  
language coordinator*  
Edna Bryn-Noiman &  
Tamara Ruben,  
*Hebrew instructors*  
Edward Portnoy,  
*Yiddish instructor*

## Jonathan Gribetz Joins Jewish Studies Faculty

Joining the Jewish studies faculty this fall is Professor **Jonathan Gribetz**, a scholar of the encounter between Jews and Arabs in the modern era, who is particularly interested in Jewish-Arab mutual perceptions in late Ottoman Palestine. He has been jointly appointed to the Department of History.

Given the nature of his field, Gribetz's teaching addresses sensitive topics. His greatest challenge, as he sees it, is to create a safe environment in which his students can read and analyze historical sources without the obscuring lens of contemporary politics and ideologies.

"Creating this sort of environment is difficult because students feel, not without reason, that much is at stake," observes Gribetz, "but because the stakes are high, intellectual honesty is all the more important."

Gribetz comes to Rutgers following a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto's Centre for Jewish Studies. He previously completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and a research fellowship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

As an undergraduate at Harvard College, he first pursued his academic interest in Diaspora Zionism through a study of a World War I-era American Zionist philosopher. Continuing his studies at Oxford University, he received a master's in modern Jewish studies; his primary research addressed Anglo-Zionism in the 1940s. He explored how Zionists in Palestine viewed the British as the enemy of their nationalist ambitions, while Jews in England struggled with their dual loyalties to Great Britain and the Zionist cause.

His initial interest in Zionism and nationalism in the Jewish Diaspora led Gribetz eastward to the focus of Zionist

aspirations: Palestine. He began to examine how Jewish arrivals to Palestine and the local Arab population perceived one another in the early days of Zionism. Fluency in Arabic and Hebrew enabled him to read published and unpublished sources written by Zionists and Arabs about their new neighbors, providing the basis for his doctoral research at Columbia University.

In the article "The Arabic-Zionist Talmud: Shimon Moyal's *At-Talmud*" (*Jewish Social Studies*, Fall 2011), Gribetz examined an early twentieth-century initiative by a Jaffa-born Jew to

translate the entire Talmud into Arabic. Although the project was aborted after the first volume was printed, Gribetz's article demonstrates how the translation aimed at once to highlight the commonalities among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam while

implicitly defending Jewish nationalism's ancient vintage.

Currently, he is revising his dissertation, "Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race and the Early 'Zionist-Arab' Encounter," for publication. In his book, Gribetz challenges the idea that the early encounter between Zionists and Arabs was conceived primarily in national terms. Instead, he argues, religion and race, as understood at that time, were central to the mutual perceptions of these communities.

Gribetz also has several other articles in the works. One is a study of an influential fin-de-siècle Arab intellectual and his ideas about the Jews as a race and their racial relationship with the Arabs. Another article analyzes an Islamic theory of Jewish secularization.

As he joins the faculty at Rutgers, Gribetz says he looks forward "to participating in the rich intellectual life of the small and vibrant Jewish studies department" and to "getting to know its many engaged and curious students."



## Technologies Advance Center's Mission

New technologies have served the Bildner Center well in its quest to make the communal experience personal and the global Jewish experience local. Jewish Studies Online brings Rutgers professors into homes worldwide; the USC Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History Archive (VHA) is now accessible from Rutgers' campuses; and advances in filmmaking have facilitated the surge of movies available to the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.

More than 3,000 people in fifty countries have accessed Jewish studies courses via our free online study program. The impact of the internet takes education well beyond the classroom.

The VHA has expanded opportunities for the use of testimonies in education. Rutgers professors and students now have direct access to these digitized interviews, which are keyword searchable. Through our educators' forum, high school teachers are also able to search for and view testimonies online to incorporate into their classroom curricula.

Think of the impact on a French literature class: students read a memoir about the occupation of Vichy, France, and then are able to watch a survivor's testimony recorded in French about the same time period. Or, in a history class focused on the rise of Nazism in the 1930s, students can view an eyewitness to that history talk about his or her personal experience.

The mix of international documentaries and narrative films in the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival showcases the broad Jewish experience. Topics range from the unlikely friendships between Muslims and Jews to the search for family roots; from the strength of Holocaust survivors to the resilience of teens with special needs.

The festival has become a community event, where neighbors and strangers come together for a shared experience and dialogue. Conversations with scholars, filmmakers, and other artists inspire audience members to share personal experiences that echo themes raised in the films. These conversations continue throughout the year—in classrooms, in homes, in public libraries, and even in supermarkets. The festival serves the community yet also operates within the academic framework of the university, exposing Rutgers students to independent films of Jewish interest and encouraging them to express their ideas in a public forum.

Sometimes the connections are even closer than we think: sitting in the computer lab, I discovered my cousin's testimony and her photos of my great-grandparents in Beuthen, Germany (now Bytom, Poland), in 1935. Her story and those photos, along with thousands of others perpetually stored in the VHA, forge a remarkable link from Rutgers to Europe and to my family's heritage.

—Karen Small, associate director



Ruth Gruber with Karen Small and Sharon Karmazin at the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

## Israel-Iran Relations in Historical Perspective

The Bildner Center's **Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Lecture** in October featured a talk by Professor **Uri Bialer**, the Maurice B. Hexter Chair in International Relations–Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Bialer explored the historical foundations of the relationship between Israel and Iran, tracing a surprising cooperation back to 1950, when Iran emerged as the second country in the Middle East, after Turkey, to recognize Israel as a state.

"Iran became the best of allies of the State of Israel up until 1978," Bialer told the audience at the Douglass Campus Center at Rutgers. "For a very, very long time, they were a better ally than the United States and France. In economic terms, Iran provided 95 percent of Israel's oil for something like fifteen years. There was intelligence

cooperation between the two. The phenomenon is unique."

In fact, Bialer said that oil was what brought the two countries together for many years, highlighting the creation of a pipeline in 1957 that ran from the southern Israeli city of Eilat to the coastal city of Ashkelon in order to transfer oil from Iran. This oil was then exported by Israel, earning the country as much as \$40 million a year in the 1960s.

Israeli-Iranian cooperation existed for nearly twenty-five years, even after the Iranian Revolution, but today, Bialer noted, it's quite a different picture in the Middle East. "Israel was able, in the 1940s through the 1970s, to work its way along without the Americans in terms of Iran," Bialer said. "I doubt that Israel will be able to work its way [now] without international cooperation."

# Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

The eleventh annual **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival** took filmgoers around the globe, portraying dramatic vignettes from modern Jewish life and introducing audiences to extraordinary individuals whose lives represent crucial moments in Jewish history. Held November 3–14, 2010, the film festival was supported by a grant from the **Karma Foundation** and by a loyal cadre of festival patrons.

The festival screened eighteen films from Argentina, Mexico, Israel, Germany, and the United States, among them nine New Jersey premieres. These films garnered a total of fifteen international awards and four other prestigious nominations. In addition, the festival offered numerous opportunities to hear the insights of film directors, screenwriters, and other experts, including subjects of the films themselves.

Most notable among festival guests was the international foreign correspondent and photojournalist **Ruth Gruber**—age ninety-nine at the time of the festival—who attended a screening of the documentary *Ahead of Time*. The film charts the course of Gruber's iconic, seventy-year career, which put her at the heart of critical events during World War II and the founding of the State of Israel. **Sharon Karmazin**, president of the Karma Foundation, interviewed Gruber at the screening, and the audience had the opportunity to listen in on their extraordinary dialogue.

New this year at the festival was "Israel in Short," a grouping of three thought-provoking, award-winning short films curated by **Isaac Zablocki**, director of the Israel Film Center in New York. The festival also paired the documentaries *Leap of Faith* and *Leaving the Fold* for a unique double feature exploring questions of religious faith and identity.

Opening night featured *Saviors in the Night*, which eloquently depicts



Ludi Boeken addresses the audience on opening night.

the perilous tale of Catholic farmers in Nazi Germany who risked their lives to save a Jewish family from deportation. The evening included an exclusive dinner reception for patrons and a special appearance by Dutch-Israeli director **Ludi Boeken**.

Among other festival highlights was *The Klezmatics: On Holy Ground*, a documentary that follows the groundbreaking, Grammy-winning band from New York's Lower East Side to Kraków, Poland, over four years. Sponsored by **David and Sylvia Steiner**, the screening featured special appearances by director **Erik Greenberg Anjou** and members of the band.

*Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story*, a documentary that celebrates the contributions of Jewish major leaguers and the Jewish passion for America's favorite pastime, was a festival favorite. The **Rutgers Class of 1954** sponsored a screening of the film that featured a talk by **Ira Berkow**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning sports columnist for the *New York Times* and the screenwriter of the film. Berkow enthralled audiences with anecdotes from his interviews with featured ballplayers and a behind-the-scenes look at how he scored in getting Sandy Koufax to participate.

The festival closed with *Berlin '36*, a German film inspired by the true story of Jewish high jumper Gretel Bergmann's remarkable but now-forgotten place in Olympic history. Her son, **Gary Lambert**, held a lively discussion with the audience after the screening.

## PUBLIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2010–2011



### Cartooning Jewish New York

**The Abram Matlofsky**

**Memorial Program**

**Funded by the Karma Foundation**

Speakers: **Robert Mankoff**, cartoon editor, *The New Yorker*; and **Eddy Portnoy**, Rutgers University

### Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution

**The Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Program**

Speaker: **Kenneth Moss**, Johns Hopkins University

### Israeli Authors Forum

A Conversation with **Michal Govrin** on her book *Hold On to the Sun*

### From Sarajevo to Israel: An Artist's Journey

Discussion with artist **Ilana Shafir**, hidden child from Sarajevo

### The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson

**Supported in part by the Sagner Family Foundation**

Speaker: **Samuel Heilman**, Queens College, CUNY

### Interfaith Cooperation on Behalf of Soviet Jewry: Catholic Nuns and the American Jewish Committee

Speaker: **Fred A. Lazin**, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## THE HERBERT AND LEONARD LITTMAN FAMILIES HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER

# Holocaust Testimonies Archive Prompts Universitywide Initiatives

Rutgers University now has digital access to the **USC Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History Archive (VHA)**, which houses 52,000 testimonies of survivors and other witnesses to the Holocaust. These interviews, which were filmed in fifty-six countries and conducted in thirty-two languages, include discussions of the interviewees' lives before, during, and after World War II. The archive is keyword searchable and can be accessed from computers on any of the Rutgers campuses. Technical support is provided by the Rutgers University libraries.

**Faculty Seminar on Innovative Teaching Methods** In October 2010, the **Bildner Center**, the **Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences (SAS)**, and the **Rutgers Libraries** presented a universitywide, interdisciplinary seminar for faculty and graduate students to examine the new cache of testimonies and the various ways it can be used in research and teaching. A panel of scholars gave presentations on their experiences using the VHA. The distinguished group included **Colin Keaveney**, French literature, University of Southern California; **Douglas Greenberg**, SAS dean and professor of history, Rutgers; and **Ethel Brooks** and **Arlene Stein**, both of sociology and women's studies at Rutgers.

**Seminar for High School Teachers** High school teachers also had a chance to explore the archive through the seminar "Teaching with Testimonies," offered through the **Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center**. Educators gathered

in the computer lab at the Alexander Library to view testimonies and discuss using these recordings in the classroom to supplement teaching of the Holocaust and World War II. Led by educational consultant **Colleen Tambuscio**, participants were introduced to the searchable database of the archive and explored strategies to create student research projects.

**Byrne Seminar for Rutgers Freshmen** Rutgers students had the opportunity to learn about the VHA through the **Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program**, which offers one-credit courses designed to connect first-year students with prominent professors throughout the university. "The Holocaust in History and Memory," taught by Professor **Douglas Greenberg**, utilized the testimonies of witnesses preserved in the VHA as a powerful tool to educate students about the Holocaust. The course gave students access to search the digital archive, view the testimonies of survivors, and contemplate the meaning of a kind of suffering that few Americans have experienced and most cannot even imagine.

Right: Conference presenters Noah Shenker, Judith Gerson, and Jeffrey Shandler



### Two-Day International Conference on Testimonies

In March 2011, as a follow-up for faculty, the Bildner Center presented the interdisciplinary conference "Testimonies, Personal Narratives, and Alternative Tellings," which gave scholars from the United States, Israel, and Europe the opportunity to examine the use of testimonies and narratives outside their primary fields. The conference planning committee, chaired by **Yael Zerubavel**, included Rutgers professors **Ethel Brooks**, sociology; **Judith Gerson**, sociology; **Jochen Hellbeck**, history; and **Jeffrey Shandler**, Jewish studies.



# Testimonies, Personal Narratives, and Alternative Tellings

March 27–28, 2011

## Vulnerable Lives: Secrets, Dust, and Noise

Opening Lecture

**Marianne Hirsch**, Columbia University  
**Leo Spitzer**, Dartmouth College

## Interpreting Testimonies: A Cross-Disciplinary View

Chair: **Nancy Sinkoff**, Rutgers University

**Alexandra Garbarini**, Williams College  
*The Impact of Testimonial Responses to the  
Ukrainian Pogroms of 1918–1921:  
History, Justice, and Public Opinion*

**Michael Rothberg**, University of Illinois  
*Multidirectional Memory and the  
Politics of Testimony*

**Judith Gerson**, Rutgers University  
*Testimonial Truths: Reading Memoirs of  
German Jewish Refugees*

**Henry Greenspan**, University of Michigan  
*Reinventing Testimony: An Emerging Paradigm in  
Holocaust and Genocide Studies*

## Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Case of the Starachowice Factory Slave Labor Camps

Keynote Lecture

**Christopher Browning**, the University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill

Greetings: **Douglas Greenberg**, executive dean,  
School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

Remarks: **Stephen Smith**, executive director,  
USC Shoah Foundation Institute for  
Visual History and Education

## Testimonies in the Public Sphere

Chair: **Laura Ahearn**, Rutgers University

**Alex Hinton**, Rutgers–Newark  
*Testimony, Truth, and Trauma:  
A Day at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal*

**Carol Kidron**, University of Haifa  
*Enlisting Survivor-Family Testimonies:  
National Intervention or Intergenerational Agency?*



Douglas Greenberg and Yael Zerubavel, with Kim Simon (second from left) and Stephen Smith of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute

**Anna-Maria Brandstetter**,  
Johannes Gutenberg–Universität Mainz  
*The Politics of “Witnessing” in  
Post-Genocide Rwanda*

## Witnessing and Alternative Telling

Chair: **Jochen Hellbeck**, Rutgers University

**Steven Barnes**, George Mason University  
*Survivors and Perpetrators Tell the Soviet Gulag  
through the Visual Arts*

**Erica Lehrer and Monica Patterson**,  
Concordia University  
*Re-Curating Testimony: Pedagogy for  
“Self-Aware” Witnessing*

**Michael G. Levine**, Rutgers University  
*Touchstones: Memories of Jews in France and  
the Klaus Barbie Trial*

**Yael Zerubavel**, Rutgers University  
*Graphic Representation as a Testimonial Narrative of  
Traumatic Memory: *Maus* and *Waltz with Bashir**

## Archived Testimonies and Mediated Stories

Chair: **Arlene Stein**, Rutgers University

**Ethel Brooks**, Rutgers University  
*Testimony, Visualities, Hope: The Limits and  
Possibilities of the Shoah Visual History Archive*

**Jeffrey Shandler**, Rutgers University  
*Survivors on *Schindler’s List*: Personal Narratives in the  
Penumbra of a Major Motion Picture Event*

**Noah Shenker**, McMaster University  
*Embodied Memory: A Comparative Study of the  
Archival Mediations of Traumatic Memory in  
Audiovisual Holocaust Testimonies*

## Yiddish Studies Leads Student to Rutgers

**Jordan N. Kutzik** grew up singing Yiddish folk songs at his Philadelphia Hebrew school and listening to the Spanish spoken by immigrants in a nearby neighborhood. Although his fascination with language emerged out of both experiences, it was ultimately Yiddish that played a role in bringing him to Rutgers.

Jordan first learned Yiddish in order to read the *yizkor*, or memorial, books written by the survivors of Eastern European Jewish communities destroyed by the Holocaust. Initially self-taught in the language, he set his sights on studying Yiddish at Rutgers after reading Professor **Jeffrey Shandler's** book *Adventures in Yiddishland*.

In addition to studying Yiddish with Professor **Edward Portnoy**, Jordan received the **Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award** to attend the Vilnius Yiddish Institute in Vilnius, Lithuania, in the summer of 2008. He recorded his frequent walks around the city with a Holocaust survivor and posted her reminiscences in Yiddish about prewar Jewish culture on YouTube with subtitles.

As a double major in Spanish and Jewish studies, Jordan found occasional opportunities for overlap between his scholarly interests. He was able to use secondary Spanish sources for research in Professor **Paola Tartakoff's** Jewish studies seminar, "Jewish Mediterranean," and he made a fortuitous connection with an important translator of Yiddish literature while studying abroad in Valencia, Spain.

In Shandler's course "The Ethnography of Contemporary Jewish Life," Jordan developed an interest in the confluence of ethnography and Jewish history. He then visited Brooklyn as part of an independent study with Shandler on the



reconstitution of Hasidic communities in the United States after World War II. There, Shandler observes, "his interest in how they speak, write, and teach Yiddish blossomed."

For his Jewish studies honors thesis, Jordan expanded on his earlier research on American Hasidim, examining their pedagogical materials. "He developed thoughtful insights into how Hasidim grapple with the challenges of maintaining their use of Yiddish in the very different context of postwar America," says Shandler.

Jordan's research has been supported by the 2010 **Deborah and Herbert B. Wasserman Research Award**, and in 2011 he received the **Rudolph and Mary Solomon Klein Award** in recognition of his scholarly achievements. His passion for Yiddish language goes beyond academia, however. As a board member of Yugntruf Youth for Yiddish, he is working to create a Yiddish Twitter network. He also serves on the board of Yiddish Farm, based in upstate New York.

Jordan is currently a fellow at the National Yiddish Book Center, where he is developing a Yiddish culture curriculum for Jewish day schools. His future plans include translating Yiddish texts into English and creating new opportunities for younger generations to speak Yiddish.

"Not a day goes by when I don't have a conversation in Yiddish," reflects Jordan, "either face-to-face or via Facebook."

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## STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

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**Ariel L. Bucher, '11**  
**Ruth Feller Rosenberg Award**

**Amanda Cove, '12**  
**Barry and Deborah Venezia Adler International Study Award**

**Rachel Fine, '12**  
**Margolin Family Award for Study in Israel**

**Shira Galler, '13**  
**Leonard and Adele Blumberg Award**

**Michal S. Gordon, '11**  
**Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award**

**Tal Grebel, '11**  
**Maurice Meyer III and Irma Meyer Award**

**Dara Grzesh, '12**  
**Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award**

**Samuel Hollander, '13**  
**Norma U. and David M. Levitt Award**

**Hannah Johnson, '13**  
**Betty and Julius Gillman Memorial Award**

**Jordan N. Kutzik, '11**  
**Rudolph and Mary Solomon Klein Award**

**Michelle D. Lieblich, '11**  
**Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award**

**Yael C. Malul, '11**  
**Louis Fishman Memorial Award**

**Laura Marder, '11**  
**Alexander and Ruth Seaman Award**

**Christopher M. Mercurio, '11**  
**Harold and Betty Perl Award**

**Matthew S. Nover, '11**  
**Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award**

**Shoshana T. Smolen, '11**  
**Gertrude and Jacob Henoch Memorial Award**

**Joseph Tadrick, '12**  
**Student Support for the Study of Yiddish**

**Samuel Weiner, '12**  
**Deborah and Herbert B. Wasserman Research Award**



## Jewish Studies Graduates

### Majors

Joshua B. Barer  
Ariel L. Bucher  
Ted R. Dreier  
Hod Klein  
Jordan N. Kutzik  
Laura Marder  
Matthew S. Nover  
Lauren E. Rabner

### Minors

Shirel E. Amar  
Cassandra Aronds  
Sophia Bailey  
Danielle S. Barta  
Miriam B. Brukner  
Mor Caspi  
Michelle F. Eisenberg  
Joshua J. Goldberg  
Jaimie G. Goldstein  
Michal S. Gordon  
Tal Grebel  
Lauren T. Grodentzick  
Freddy J. Kpeli  
Jordan A. Lieber  
Michelle D. Lieblich  
Yael C. Malul  
Christopher M. Mercurio  
Adele K. Mizrahi  
Jeffrey A. Myers  
Ian D. Price  
Samuel A. Schiff  
Julia S. Selznick  
Mitchell Shusteris  
Rachel L. Skoff  
Shoshana T. Smolen  
Emma S. Stern  
Elizabeth L. Unger

## FACULTY SEMINARS 2010–2011

### The Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar

The Schwartzman seminar, “When May We Kill Our Brethren? Jews at War in Europe 1848–1918,” was delivered in February by **Derek J. Penslar**, the Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History at the University of Toronto. His talk dealt with the tension that Jewish soldiers often experienced between their patriotic inclinations and their transnational attachments to Jews in the lands of their country’s enemies. Penslar also gave the public talk “The Jewish Soldier in Modern Jewish Memory: ‘Willing Patriot or Forced Conscript?’” He examined Jewish experiences with, and historical views on, military service, and how they have changed in the wake of the Holocaust and since the establishment of Israel.

#### Additional faculty seminars:

- **Federica Francesconi, Aresty Visiting Scholar**, Bildner Center: “Jews under Inquisitorial Surveillance: Reading, Culture and Censorship in Early Modern Italy”
- **Corinna Ruth Kaiser, Dr. Norman and Syril Reitman Visiting Scholar**, Bildner Center: “Who Is Pharaoh, Who Are the Slaves? Contemporary Updates to the Passover Narrative in Light of the Arab-Israeli Conflict”

## VISITING SCHOLARS 2011–2012

**Israel Bartal** is the Avraham Harman Professor of Jewish History and the former dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A world-renowned scholar of the history and culture of Eastern European Jewry, Jewish nationalism, and the Jews of Palestine in the pre-Zionist era, Bartal has written numerous publications, including *The Jews of Eastern Europe: 1772–1881* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005, 2006) and *Cossack and Bedouin: Land and People in Jewish Nationalism* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 2007). At Rutgers, Bartal will participate in the Bildner Center’s public programming and teach “History of Zionism.”

**Anna B. Manchin**, the **Aresty Visiting Scholar**, earned her Ph.D. in modern European history in 2008 from Brown University and subsequently was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Jewish Studies. Her forthcoming publications include “Imagining Modern Hungary through Film: Debates on National Identity, Modernity and Cinema in early 20th-Century Hungary,” in *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity: European Perspectives on Film Cultures and Cinema-going*, edited by Richard Maltby et al. (Routledge, 2011), and “Jewish Humor and the Hollywood Narrative in Interwar Hungarian Comedies,” in *Storytelling in World Cinemas*, edited by Lina Khatib (Wallflower Press, 2011). At Rutgers, she will teach “Holocaust Media” and “Jews and the Movies.”

**Sara Jessica Milstein**, an **American Council of Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow** funded through the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, obtained her doctorate in Hebrew and Judaic studies in 2010 from New York University. Her publications include *The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic: The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative* (E. J. Brill, Cuneiform Monographs Series, 2010), coauthored with Daniel Fleming, and “From Rambam to Richard Wright: Job, the Delayed Angel, and the Conception of Modern Midrashim,” in *Why Hidest Thy Face: Job in Traditions and Literature*, edited by Mishael Caspi (D. & F. Scott Publishing, 2002). During her two years at Rutgers, she will teach “Women in the Bible,” “Jewish Society and Culture I,” and “Beginnings: A Literary Reading of Genesis.”



Student award recipients gather with faculty at a ceremony in May.

## FACULTY UPDATES

**Maurice J. Elias** received the Joseph E. Zins Distinguished Scholar Award for Action Research in Social and Emotional Learning from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). He is the principal investigator of Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Success, a project funded by the NoVo Foundation. He gave the keynote address, “Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development Interventions in Schools: Addressing Key Variations across Groups,” at the Seventh Annual Culture Conference, “Addressing Culture, Race, and Ethnicity in Different Contexts,” held at the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, in Piscataway. He coauthored with Jonathan Cohen a reference guide, *School Climate: Building Safe, Supportive and Engaging Classrooms and Schools*, published by National Professional Resources.

**Leslie Fishbein** chaired the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. She was a panelist in “Race Matters: Teaching Race and Representation in the K–16 Classroom,” a session—cosponsored by the K–16 Collaboration Committee of the American Studies Association (ASA) and the Visual Culture Caucus—at the ASA convention in San Antonio. She presented an all-day workshop, “The Culture of the Sixties,” to the Institute for High School Teachers, sponsored by the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. She also delivered lectures on Jewish topics for the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

**Ziva Galili** gave the following talks: “Archives in Post-Soviet Russia” at the Inter-University Young Scholars Forum, organized by the Hebrew University; and “From Russia to Palestine and Elsewhere: The Personal and the Collective in Writing My Family’s History” at the History Forum at Rutgers University.

**Judith Gerson** presented a paper, “Narrating Luck, Denying Trauma: German Jewish Refugees’ Flight and Resettlement during the Nazi Era,” at the American Sociological Association conference in Atlanta and at the Rutgers conference on testimonies (see p. 7). She presented the paper “‘I Was Lucky’: Jewish Refugees’ Narratives of Forced

Emigration from the *Altreich*” for the session “Narrating the Past in the Present: Interpreting Diaries, Interviews, and Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors” at the 42nd annual Association for Jewish Studies conference. She was a visiting scholar at SKOK—Centre for Women’s and Gender Research at the University of Bergen in Norway, where she was invited to present a seminar paper, “Reading Gender in the Memoirs of German Jewish Refugees during the Nazi Era.” She was also invited to present a paper, “Holocaust Narratives, Immigrant Lives: German Jewish Refugees, Gender, and Collective Memory,” at the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Oslo, Norway.

**Martha Helfer** gave the talk “‘Ein heimlich Ding’: The Self as Object in Annette von Droste-Huelshoff” at the German Studies Association conference in Oakland, California. A German version of the paper was published as “‘Ein heimlich Ding’: Das Selbst als Objekt bei Annette von Droste-Huelshoff,” in *Redigierte Tradition: Literaturhistorische Positionierungen Annette von Droste-Huelshoffs* (Schoeningh). With William C. Donahue, she organized the second German Jewish Studies Workshop at Duke University.

**Michael G. Levine** was promoted to full professor. He was awarded a stipend by the National Endowment for the Humanities to participate in its seminar “Walter Benjamin’s Later Writings” at the University of California–Irvine. He also was awarded the Camargo Foundation Fellowship in Cassis, France. He gave the following talks: “Celan on Poetry’s Demands and Abrahamic Sacrifice” at the American Comparative Literature Association’s annual conference; “Celan’s Poems for Eric” at the German Jewish Studies Workshop at Duke University; and “German Writing on French Borders” (Camargo Foundation, France). He also presented a paper at the Rutgers conference on testimonies (see p. 7). He published “The Day the Sun Stood Still: Benjamin’s Theses, Trauma and the Eichmann Trial,” *MLN*. He also served on the editorial board of the journal *Nexus: Essays in German Jewish Studies*.

**Gary A. Rendsburg** spent the past year on sabbatical. He was a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, at Yarnton Manor in England. He delivered lectures at the universities of

Oxford, Cambridge, London, Manchester, and Birmingham, as well as at Trinity College in Bristol. He served for the second time as the Mandelbaum Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney in Australia. He was a visiting scholar in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of California–Los Angeles and the Barnett Visiting Scholar in Jewish Literature at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, in Fort Worth. He published the following articles: “The Siloam Tunnel Inscription: Historical and Linguistic Perspectives,” *Israel Exploration Journal*, coauthored with William M. Schniedewind; and “Qumran Hebrew (with a Trial Cut [1QS]),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni* (Brill).

**Jeffrey Shandler** was nominated to serve as the next president of the Association for Jewish Studies, beginning in December 2011. He gave the following talks: “The Man in the Glass Box: The Eichmann Trial on American Television” at the international colloquium “Le procès Eichmann: Réceptions, médiations, posterities” in Paris; “Keepers of Accounts: The Practice of Inventory in Modern Jewish Life” at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; “Looking beyond the Book—and Back: Lessons from the History of Jews and New Media” at the “Symposium on the Jewish Book: Past, Present, Future,” Center for Jewish History, New York; “The Yiddish Consumer Culture of Contemporary Hasidim” and “The Image of Isaac Bashevis Singer in American Films” (in Yiddish) for the Clara Sumpff Yiddish Lecture Series, Stanford University; “Jews and New Media: An Old Story?” at the symposium “Journals and Jewish Intellectual Life: The *Jewish Quarterly Review* at 100,” organized by the University of Pennsylvania; and “Queer Yiddishkeit” at Hampshire College. He also presented a paper at the Rutgers conference on testimonies (see p. 7) and was a panelist at the symposium “Queer Jewish Religiosity in America: Directions and Trends” at Stanford University. He was a participant in the roundtable “Joel and Ethan Coen’s *A Serious Man*,” a respondent for the session “Comics, Museums, Cafés: Jewish Culture on Display,” and chair of the session “Representing Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising” at the 42nd annual Association for Jewish Studies conference. He published the following essays: “The Holocaust in Jewish Culture,” in *The Oxford*

*Handbook of Holocaust Studies*; “Jewish Popular Culture,” in *The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture*; “*Di toyre fun skhoyre*, or, I Shop, Therefore I Am: The Consumer Cultures of American Jews,” in *Longing, Belonging, and the Making of Jewish Consumer Culture* (Brill); “The Jewish Book and Beyond in Modern Times,” *AJS Review*; “Keepers of Accounts: The Practice of Inventory in Modern Jewish Life,” Twentieth Annual David W. Belin Lecture (Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, University of Michigan); “The Cultural Politics of Yiddish in the United States after the Holocaust,” in *Amsterdam Yiddish Symposium 5: The Politics of Yiddish* (University of Amsterdam); “Transformations of the *Ketubbah*; Or, the Gallery of Broken Marriages,” *Images: A Journal for Jewish Art and Visual Culture*; “Wyprawy do Jidyszlandu: Postwernakularny język i kultura jidysz,” in *Cwiszn: Żdowski kwartalnik o literaturze i sztuce* (a Polish translation of excerpts from Shandler’s book *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture*); “Teaching Jewish Studies with Museums,” *AJS Perspectives*; “Looking for the Lower East Side,” in *The View from Below: Photography, Innovation, and the Lower East Side* (University of Michigan); “*This Is Your Life: Holocaust Stories*,” in *This Is Your Life: Preserving Holocaust Survivor Testimonies on Early Television* (UCLA Film and Television Archive).

**Nancy Sinkoff** gave the following lectures: “Vilna on My Mind: The Polishness of Lucy S. Dawidowicz’s Turn to Neoconservatism,” at the Third Annual U.S. Intellectual History Conference, CUNY Graduate Center; and “Jewish Politics in America and the Rise of the New Conservatives” for the Queens College Jewish Studies Program. She also chaired a session at the Rutgers conference on testimonies (see p. 7). She presented the paper “Fiction’s Archive: Ethnography and Authenticity in John Hersey’s *The Wall*,” organized the panel “Representing Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising,” was a respondent for the panel “Transatlantic Transfers: The Salvage and Reconstruction of Jewish Culture after WWII,” chaired the panel “Haskalah Sea Journeys,” and participated in the roundtable “Totems and Taboos” at the 42nd annual Association for Jewish Studies conference. She was the on-air historian for “Shalom USA,” WVIE-AM, Baltimore, streamed live on [www.fox1350.com](http://www.fox1350.com) and [www.shalomusaradio.com](http://www.shalomusaradio.com), where she gave a talk entitled “Benjamin Franklin’s Influence

on *Mussar*.” She continued to serve as the academic coordinator of the Graduate Fellows Program at the Center for Jewish History in New York and was the Brown Bag Speaker for the seminar “The Perils of Sentimentalism: Privacy’s Inviolability and the Writing of Lucy S. Dawidowicz’s Biography.” She was elected to the board of trustees of the Association for Jewish Studies.

**Paola Tartakoff** was a fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies (CAJS), University of Pennsylvania. She presented her research in the CAJS seminar series, and she also gave a talk, “Jewish Converts and Poverty in the Medieval Crown of Aragon: Problems and Possibilities,” at the CAJS fall conference, “Truth and Authenticity in Conversion Narratives.” She published an article, “Christian Kings and Jewish Conversion in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,” in the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*. She also served as a panelist for the program “Conversations on Conversion” at the Center for Jewish History in New York.

**Emma Wasserman** gave the following talks: “Does Christian Apocalyptic Further Progressive Politics? Cosmic Hierarchy, Apocalypticism, and Subjectivity in the Letters of Paul” at the annual meeting of the Modern Languages Association, in Los Angeles; “Cosmic Hierarchy and Rebellion in 1 Corinthians 15” at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature; “Evil Everywhere? Demons, Spirits, and Powers in the Letters of Paul” at Virginia Commonwealth University, as part of the Blake lecture series; and “Cosmic Hierarchy in the Apocalypticism of the Apostle Paul” at the International Association for the History of Religions Quinquennial World Congress, in Toronto. She is a fellow this year at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

**Azzan Yadin-Israel** published a number of scholarly studies, including “Rabbi Akiva’s Youth,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*; and “*Aretz et la sémantique de la terre*,” *Les cahiers du judaïsme*. A shorter entry on Rabbi Akiva appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Ancient Judaism* (Eerdmans). He published a more popular essay, “A Measure of Beauty,” on the Israeli hip-hop band Hadag Nahash in the *Jewish Review of Books*. He chaired the session “Antiquity in the Modern Israeli Imagination” and presented the paper “Divine Presence and Authorial Intent” for the panel “Law, Theology, and Ideology in Tannaitic Literature” at the 42nd annual Association for Jewish Studies conference.

He continued to serve as head of the Rabbinics Division of the Association for Jewish Studies. He remains a coeditor of the Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism book series for Mohr Siebeck. He completed his second year as acting chair of the Classics Department.

**Yael Zerubavel** gave the keynote lecture, “The Tree and the Forest in Israeli Culture: The Transformation of National Symbols,” at the conference “Designing National Parks in Israel,” and presented the colloquium “The Desert in Israeli Culture” for the History, Theory and Criticism Group in the Department of Architecture, at the Technion. She presented a paper, “Performing the Past: Reimagining Antiquity in Israeli Culture,” at the conference “Zionist Historiography across Time and Space” at Yale University. She was a member of the panel “Author Meets Critics,” dealing with Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi’s book *Yitzhak Rabin’s Assassination and the Dilemmas of Commemoration*, at the Eastern Sociological Society meeting in Philadelphia. She organized the international conference “Testimonies, Personal Narratives, and Alternative Tellings,” sponsored by the Bildner Center, and presented a paper (see p. 7). She took part in the panel discussion “History, Memory, Atrocity” at the Rutgers Comparative Literature Graduate Student Conference “Survival Logics: Narrative and the Margins.” She organized the panel “Antiquity in the Modern Israeli Imagination,” presented the paper “Biblical Images and Secular Interpretations in Israeli Culture,” and chaired the session “The Jewish State and Jewish Selves in Contemporary Israel” at the 42nd annual Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) conference. She concluded her third term on the board of directors of the AJS, and continued to serve on the editorial boards of the journals *Israel Studies*, *Journal of Israeli History*, *Israel Studies Review*, *AJS Perspectives*, and *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds*. She also served on the editorial boards of the Rutgers University Press series *Jewish Cultures of the World* and the Academic Studies Press series *Israel: Society, Culture, and History*. Her publications included “Coping with the Legacy of Death: The War Widow in Israeli Films,” in *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion* (University of Texas Press); and “A Secular Return to the Bible? Reflections on Israeli Society, National Memory, and the Politics of the Past,” *AJS Perspectives*.

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**Daniel Libeskind**, architect  
**James Young**, University of  
Massachusetts–Amherst  
September 18

### Going Viral: Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and the Role of the Media

The Raoul Wallenberg Annual  
Program funded by Leon and  
Toby Cooperman  
**Kenneth Stern**,  
American Jewish Committee  
**Jack G. Shaheen**,  
Southern Illinois University  
**Clement Price**, moderator,  
Rutgers–Newark  
October 17  
Cosponsored with Center for  
Middle Eastern Studies

### Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

October 27–November 8

### Egyptian Intellectuals' Critique of Nazism at the Outbreak of World War II

**Israel Gershoni**,  
Tel Aviv University  
December 8

### Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews

The Toby and Herbert Stolzer  
Endowed Program  
**Jonathan Sarna**,  
Brandeis University  
February 29

### Glory and Agony: Isaac's Sacrifice and National Narrative

Supported in part by the  
Sagner Family Foundation  
**Yael S. Feldman**,  
New York University  
March 20

### The Pleasures and Perils of Translating the Bible

In conjunction with the Henry  
Schwartzman Endowed Faculty  
Seminar

**Robert Alter**, University of  
California–Berkeley  
March 26

### Memory, Nostalgia, and Dissent in Contemporary Israel

Ruth and Alvin Rockoff  
Annual Program  
**Israel Bartal**, the Hebrew  
University of Jerusalem  
**Michael Feige**, Ben-Gurion  
University of the Negev  
**Yael Zerubavel**, Rutgers  
April 22

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