

Jewish Studies at Rutgers

Number 18, Fall 2014

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

INSIDE

Bildner Center Programs
Pages 4–8

Holocaust Education
Page 9

Donor Support
Page 10

Student News
Pages 11–13

Faculty Updates
Pages 14–15

Contested Memories Explored in New Faculty Seminar

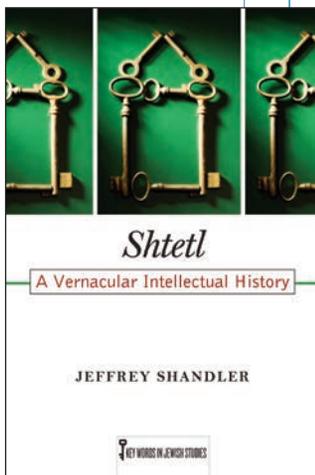
The Bildner Center sponsored a yearlong faculty research seminar entitled “**Contested Memories and the Politics of Change.**” The seminar included Rutgers scholars in the humanities and social sciences as well as international visiting scholars. Participants met at the Center regularly to discuss their research from a comparative, cross-cultural perspective.

Contested memories emerge as a result of historical ruptures and political conflicts, following waves of immigration and regime changes, and in the aftermath of war, violence, expulsion, and genocide. The study of national memories and divergent narratives, mnemonic practices and embodied and visual memories, trauma, witnessing, and testimonial narratives, human rights and transitional justice, is part of a growing interdisciplinary field of memory studies.



Participants at Contested Memories Conference

► See [CONFERENCE](#) on page 4



New Book Explores the Intellectual History of the Shtetl

In Yiddish, *shtetl* simply means “town.” How does such an unassuming word come to loom so large in modern Jewish culture, with a proliferation of uses and connotations? By examining the meaning of *shtetl* in his new book, Professor **Jeffrey Shandler** asks how Jewish life in provincial towns in Eastern Europe has become the subject of extensive creativity, memory, and scholarship from the early modern era in European history to the present.

In the post-Holocaust era, the *shtetl* looms large in public culture as the epitome of a

bygone traditional Jewish communal life. People now encounter the Jewish history of these towns through an array of cultural practices, including fiction, documentary photography, film, memoirs, art, heritage tourism, and political activism. At the same time, the *shtetl* attracts growing scholarly interest, as historians, social scientists, literary critics, and others seek to understand both the complex reality of life in provincial towns and the nature of its wide-ranging remembrance.

► See [NEW BOOK ON SHTETL](#) on page 13

Director's Desk



Every other Wednesday throughout the past year, the Bildner Center buzzed with activity as participants in the faculty seminar “Contested Memories and the Politics of Change” gathered for their biweekly meeting to discuss their latest research. This new initiative of the Bildner Center brought together a group of faculty from various disciplines throughout Rutgers, along with international visiting scholars and advanced doctoral students. The yearlong seminar provided an open, dynamic, and stimulating forum where we delved into lively discussions of each member’s work—sharing ideas, raising questions, and exploring new research directions. The enthusiasm generated in the group often extended the conversations well beyond the official framework of the seminar. The seminar concluded with a three-day conference in May, to which other scholars were invited.

The leading role of the Bildner Center in organizing this research group is deeply rooted in the centrality of collective memory to Jewish tradition and culture, and in recent decades there has been a growing scholarly interest in memory from a wide array of fields. The seminar and the conference opened the scholarly exchange to participants who represent the diversity of research areas and topics. The result was a highly enriching and productive intellectual experience that led seminar and conference participants to express their hope that the Bildner Center will continue this forum in the future.

The creation of an annual research seminar under the auspices of the Bildner Center expands its programming in a significant new way, building on the Center’s mission, its distinguished reputation among visiting scholars from Israel and Europe, and the strength of Rutgers’ own faculty. We are pleased to provide the intellectual and institutional setting for such interdisciplinary research seminars on an ongoing basis.

The Bildner Center also continues its important work in Holocaust education in order to help New Jersey teachers meet the challenge of the state’s mandate to teach about the Holocaust. The Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education, offered under the aegis of the Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center, encourages teachers to try new ways to approach this subject and affects thousands of students across the state. In addition, our series of public programs attracts large audiences to campus, often surprising our guest speakers with their scope. The huge public turnout at the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival reflects the enthusiastic participation in this exciting ten-day annual event that the Center sponsors.

The Center’s progress in these multiple directions enhances Rutgers’ international visibility and educational mission as a public university. We thank our donors who recognize the impact of the education that the Center provides to scholars, students, and the public, and we rely on your continued support to develop these initiatives and programs.

—Yael Zerubavel, Director
The Allen and Joan Bildner Center
for the Study of Jewish Life

Chair's Desk



Undergraduates are increasingly concerned about how a college education connects with their professional futures. Departments in the humanities and social sciences now expect to be asked, “What kind of job can I get if I pick this as my major?” To some extent, professors have already been answering this question, if indirectly. We have long explained the lasting value of the skills that a liberal arts education provides: clear and well-organized writing, methods of conducting research, and assessment of multiple points of view on a given subject dispassionately, among others. In addition, particular departments impart knowledge and skills that can enhance a student’s career path—grasping the political or cultural background of an unfamiliar people, learning another language, understanding the impact of the past on present circumstances, and so on.

As my colleagues and I are asked ever more frequently, “What career can I pursue with a degree in Jewish studies?” we address the question forthrightly. In recent years, we have invited people from a wide range of professions—education, philanthropy, social work, public culture, clergy—to talk with students about how a background in Jewish studies can help them pursue an array of careers. The Department of Jewish Studies has long offered a Jewish studies internship, which enables students to gain hands-on experience in a Jewish cultural or social organization for a semester, do a research project on a topic related to the internship, and receive course credit for their efforts. For some of our students, the chance to work in a museum or archive has been a life-changing opportunity, inspiring them to pursue a career in these venues.

Last year we began videotaping interviews with recent Rutgers alumni talking about their professional lives after majoring or minoring in Jewish studies. Excerpts from some of these videos now appear on our department’s website. It has been exciting for my colleagues and me to see our students pursuing careers that they clearly love—working for a nonprofit organization, becoming a social worker, studying to be a rabbi, or pursuing a doctoral degree in history. It is also very gratifying when students talk about the role that our department played in preparing them for their careers: researching and writing a thesis, deepening their knowledge of Jewish texts or of the history of the Middle East, learning Hebrew or Yiddish. And perhaps nothing makes us happier than hearing students’ fond memories of a teacher or a course and explanations of how they benefited from the study of an unfamiliar aspect of Jewish life or from the caring attention of a dedicated instructor.

We continue to explore new ways to help students connect the intellectual riches of Jewish studies with diverse professional possibilities. Most of all, we look forward to hearing from our alumni about their post-college pursuits.

—Jeffrey Shandler, Chair
Department of Jewish Studies

Crossing Boundaries: Jewish Studies at Rutgers

“Jewish studies by its nature is about crossing boundaries,” observes Professor **Jeffrey Shandler**, department chair. “The field includes scholars working in virtually every discipline of the humanities and the social sciences, and what they study regularly entails Jews’ relations with their neighbors. For many scholars, boundaries—political, cultural, intellectual, ideological—don’t mark where Jewish studies ends, but where it takes place.”

The Jewish studies’ mission to reach across the academic aisle is manifested in the cross-listing of its courses with other departments, the research and scholarship of its faculty, and the Bildner Center’s collaboration with faculty from the breadth of disciplines in its many academic and public programs.

It was precisely this open interdisciplinary approach that drew **Aleksandra Buñčić** to Rutgers as a Fulbright Scholar. A doctoral student in the Department of Art History at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, Buñčić is researching the iconography of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a fourteenth-century illuminated Hebrew manuscript with a mysterious past.

“I wanted to work with a historian whose background is in medieval Catalan history and Jewish-Christian relations in order to better understand the Haggadah’s context,” says Buñčić, who deepened her research and developed meaningful ties with scholars in the department and beyond under the mentorship of **Paola Tartakoff**, associate professor of Jewish studies and history.

Jewish studies faculty, in fact, help forge valuable connections with the university community at large. Last year, three Jewish studies professors taught Byrne Seminars, which expose first-year students to the research of Rutgers faculty. Offerings included **Gary A. Rendsburg’s** “The Journey Motif in Ancient Literature,” **Azzan Yadin-Israel’s** popular “Bruce Springsteen’s Theology,” and **Hilit-Surowitz-Israel’s** “When God Came to the City: Urban Life and the Transformation of Religion.”

During the spring 2014 semester, Professor Tartakoff offered the course “Muslims, Christians, and Jews: Conflict and Coexistence” for the School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program. In addition, **Nancy Sinkoff**, associate professor of Jewish studies and history, was appointed director of the Center for European Studies this past July.

As **Yael Zerubavel**, Bildner Center director and former

chair of Jewish studies, notes, “Jewish studies at Rutgers, from its inception, had a strong interdisciplinary bent in its study of Jews and emphasis on understanding their culture in its broader historical context. The Bildner Center’s programs have been shaped with the same approach in mind.”

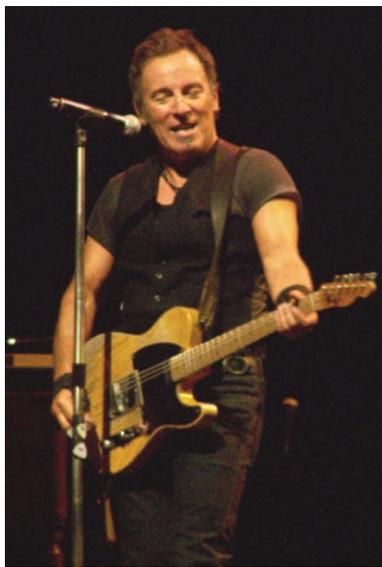
In the same spirit, the Bildner Center reached out to faculty from a wide array of fields, including history, sociology, political science, anthropology, comparative literature, Jewish studies, women’s studies, the arts, and art history, to participate in its yearlong research seminar organized by Zerubavel. The seminar members included Rutgers faculty as well as visiting scholars from other

American, Canadian, and Israeli universities. The interdisciplinary and international character of the group and the geographic span of their studies provided a highly stimulating context for its discussions. The concluding conference further expanded the scope of this scholarly exchange.

Similarly, the Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education (MTI), the Bildner Center’s Holocaust education initiative, invites Rutgers faculty and visiting faculty from multiple disciplines to share their expertise in Holocaust-related studies. Most recently, Associate Professor **Ethel Brooks** of the Rutgers sociology and women and gender studies departments discussed the experience of the Roma/Sinti, and **Geoffrey Giles**, professor of history at the University of Florida, addressed the treatment of homosexuals in the fall course “Social Outsiders and the Holocaust.”

The Rutgers Jewish Film Festival, the Center’s signature public program, reflects cooperation across departmental boundaries as well. During the 2013 festival, the Center cosponsored the screening of *Let’s Dance*, a look at Israel’s influential modern dance movement, with the **Rutgers Dance Department**, and a special on-campus screening of *Besa: The Promise*, about the Albanian rescue of Jews during the Holocaust, with the **Center for Middle Eastern Studies**.

Additionally, Rutgers **GAIA Centers’ 2013–2015 Biennial Theme—Global Health!**—was represented in two Bildner Center public talks in 2013: a panel titled “Jews and Food: Tradition, Sustainability, and Health,” and another called “Spirituality and Health,” which received additional participation from the Rutgers **Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research**.



Azzan Yadin-Israel’s Byrne Seminar explored the theological influences underpinning Bruce Springsteen’s lyrics.

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

Contested Memories and the Contours of the Past

The contested memories seminar culminated in a free three-day interdisciplinary conference, attended by seminar participants and faculty and graduate students from Rutgers and other institutions. Most seminar participants gave presentations and were joined by scholars from outside institutions. It was supported by Rutgers [GAIA Centers](#) and the [Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar Fund](#). Three key members had obligations abroad and were greatly missed: senior scholars Joanna Regulska and Jan Kubik from Rutgers and visiting professor Israel Bartal from Hebrew University.

Conference Program, May 12–14, 2014

Keynote Lecture

Jeffrey K. Olick, University of Virginia, Sociology and History

[Systems of Memory: Beyond the Matryoshka Doll](#)

Contested Narratives and Nation-Building

Chair: **Rudolph M. Bell**, Rutgers, History

Jonathan Gribetz, Rutgers, Jewish Studies and History

[The Palestinian Memory of Jewish Religious Reform](#)

Amy Linch, Penn State, Political Science

[Contested Memories of the Fall of Communism and Post-Communist Nation-Building](#)

Matt Matsuda, Rutgers, History

[Genealogies, Genetics, and Recovered Pasts in the Pacific Context](#)

Mnemonic Battles: Trauma and After

Chair: **Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi**, Rutgers, Anthropology

Thomas DeGloma, CUNY, Hunter College, Sociology

[The Strategies and Tactics of Mnemonic Battle: Patterns in the Dynamics of Conflict over the Past](#)

Paul Schalow, Rutgers, Asian Languages and Cultures

[Victimhood's Meaning and Materiality: Ruins as Memorial Sites in East Asia](#)

Laura Cohen, Rutgers, Global Affairs

[Memorial Sites as Centers for Public Memory, Space, and Healing: The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center and Cemetery to the Victims of the 1995 Genocide](#)

Mapping Memory in Contested Sites

Chair: **Michael Curry**, UCLA, Geography

Natasha Zaretsky, Rutgers, Bildner Center, Aresty Visiting Scholar

[Sites, Spaces, and Borders: The Politics of Body and Time in Democratic Argentina](#)

Anita Bakshi, Rutgers, Center for Cultural Analysis

[The Politics of Heritage: Cityscape and Nationalism](#)

Yael Zerubavel, Rutgers, Jewish Studies and History

[History and Space Metaphors: Contested Memories in Israeli Popular Culture](#)

The Predicament of Intimate Memories

Chair: **Alisse Waterston**, CUNY, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Anthropology

Ziva Galili, Rutgers, History

[Intergenerational Reflections on Subject, Collective, and Memory](#)

Galit Hasan-Rokem, Hebrew University, Folklore; Rutgers, Bildner Visiting Scholar

[A Contestable Auto-ethnography of a Childhood on the Coast of the Baltic: Between the Litvaks and the Polacks](#)

Ethel Brooks, Rutgers, Women's & Gender Studies and Sociology

[Fraught Intimacies: Entwined Histories of the \(Post-\) Holocaust](#)

Visual Memories

Chair: **Freddie Rokem**, Tel Aviv University, Theatre Arts

Carol Zemel, York University, Art History; Rutgers, Bildner Visiting Scholar

[Time between Time: Early Visual Accounts/ Narratives of the Shoah](#)

Ken Aptekar, Independent Artist

["Jesus Christ is next door!" Progress Report on NACHBARN: An Exhibition by Ken Aptekar in Lübeck, Germany](#)

Shelley Salamensky, UCLA, Theater, Film, & Television

["Jewface" and "Jewfacade": Cultural Reenactment and Contested Memory in Poland, Spain, and Asian Russia](#)

Mapping Ararat: Remembering an Imaginary Jewish Homeland

Chair: **Melissa Shiff**, University of Toronto, Art

Louis Kaplan, University of Toronto, Art History

Witnessing and Silences

Chair: **Judith Gerson**, Rutgers, Sociology and Women's & Gender Studies

Belinda Davis, Rutgers, History

[Speaking Out, Holding Back: Memory and the Mouth among West German Activists](#)

► See **CONFERENCE** on page 5

► **CONFERENCE** from page 4

Edna Lomsky-Feder, Hebrew University, Sociology & Anthropology, and Education

Orna Sasson-Levy, Bar-Ilan University, Sociology & Anthropology

Testimony from a Gendered Perspective: Women Breaking the Silence as a Case Study

Hillel Cohen, Hebrew University, Middle Eastern Studies; New York University, Israel Studies

Massacres and Lynchings in 1929 Palestine: Who Remembers What and Why

Constructing Narratives of History and Memory

Chair: **Alex Hinton**, Rutgers–Newark, Anthropology

Paul Hanebrink, Rutgers, History and Jewish Studies

The Problem of Jewish “Visibility” in the Central European Revolutions of 1919

Seth Anziska, Columbia University, History

Revisiting the 1982 Lebanon War: History, Memory, and the Making of Akram Zaatari’s Letter to a Refusing Pilot

Robin Wagner-Pacifici, The New School, Sociology

Reconfiguring Memory Studies as Event Studies

Roundtable: Memories and the Contours of the Past

Michael G. Levine, Rutgers, German and Comparative Literature

Jeffrey K. Olick, University of Virginia, Sociology and History

Robin Wagner-Pacifici, The New School, Sociology

Eviatar Zerubavel, Rutgers, Sociology

PUBLIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Pipeline: How Oil Created the Modern Middle East and How Water Can Transform it

The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Lecture

Rachel Havrelock, University of Illinois at Chicago

Cosponsored by Rutgers Center for Middle Eastern Studies

New Forms of Ethnic Traditions: Israel in the 21st Century

Galit Hasan-Rokem, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Bildner Visiting Scholar

Jewish Art and the Struggle of Tradition in Modernity

The Ruth Ellen Steinman and Edward J. Bloustein Memorial Lecture

Richard I. Cohen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Cosponsored by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy



Jewish Revival in Contemporary Poland

The Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program

Supported by the Leon and Toby Cooperman Fund

Geneviève Zubrzycki, University of Michigan, Sociology

Since the fall of Communism, Poland’s small Jewish communities have undergone a significant revival, a process occurring in tandem with Poles’ soul-searching about their role in the Holocaust and about Poland’s Jewish past. This interest is visible in the mushrooming of festivals of Jewish culture throughout Poland, the renewed popularity of klezmer music, the dramatic proliferation of Judaica bookstores and Jewish restaurants, and the governmental sponsorship of new museums and memorials. What does Poland’s Jewish renaissance teach us about the politics of memory and identity formation, and more broadly the relationship between national identity and religion? Zubrzycki discussed the revival of Jewish culture in Poland as part of a broader process of redefinition of Polish national identity and the building of pluralism in contemporary Poland.

Public program presented as part of the Contested Memories Conference.

Programs for Students

Brave Miss World (film screening)

Cosponsored by Rutgers Hillel Center for Israel Engagement, Rutgers Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, and College Avenue Campus Dean

Besa: The Promise (film screening)

Cosponsored by Rutgers Center for Middle Eastern Studies
With guest appearance by one of the film’s producers, Jason Williams

Campus Yom Hashoah Commemoration

Presented by Rutgers Hillel

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

Impact in the Community

The Bildner Center's public programs reach a wide variety of people from diverse backgrounds and communities and help to fulfill Rutgers University's mission of lifelong learning. We continue to engage the university with the community to advance learning around a broad range of innovative and multidimensional topics related to Jewish life.

The educational programs of the Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center reach schoolteachers who have an impact on thousands of public school students. Our Holocaust education program gives teachers access to the newest scholarship in the field through Rutgers faculty and other experts. Special workshops focusing on pedagogy help educators sift through the vast resources available and create and implement their curricula.

As we grapple with the challenges of teaching this difficult topic, in particular teaching about the complex behavior of individuals who were involved, we encourage teachers to focus on achieving several outcomes with their students: develop critical thinking skills, learn to identify prejudice, and make informed choices while realizing that choices have consequences. Our goal is to help teachers identify the lessons of the Holocaust and promote critical thinking in their students about their own role in society.

This year the program takes a fresh look at key themes in Holocaust history and memory, for example, the Soviet encounter with the Nazi camps, in the fall semester, and it will expand into human rights issues in the spring, with a focus on justice after the Holocaust and the more recent genocide in Rwanda.

—Karen Small, Associate Director

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

A girl's shoe, some buttons, a cup—all clues pointing to the existence, once, of human life. After **Christopher Nicola** stumbled upon them in 1993 while spelunking in Ukraine's vast network of gypsum caves, he sought out their provenance, uncovering an astounding tale of survival. It soon became his mission to share the remarkable story of the thirty-nine Jews who hid in the caves from the Nazis for an unparalleled 511 days.

The documentary *No Place on Earth*, narrated by Nicola himself, follows his moving journey. The film anchored opening night festivities at the 2013 **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**, which included a fascinating conversation with both Nicola and director **Janet Tobias**. The Bildner Center designated a special free matinee screening of the film for New Jersey high school students as part of its continuing effort to expand its reach to new audiences.

While *No Place on Earth* includes survivor testimonies, films throughout the festival introduced audiences to an array of fascinating personalities, both real and fictional. Their uniquely Jewish and broadly human experiences cut across geographic, historical, religious, and societal spectra. Among them were the real-life inspiration for Fagin in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, six former heads of Israel's Shin Bet, and two men—one Palestinian, the other Israeli—who fall in love, though the odds are stacked against them.

In the Israeli feature *Fill the Void*, one of the most popular Israeli titles of 2013, younger daughter Shira is set up with her widowed brother-in-law after her elder sister dies in childbirth. One of the special guests at the festival was lead actress **Hadas Yaron**, who also made a special visit to several Hebrew courses and to a class on Israeli film during her time at Rutgers.

Let's Dance features the work of three leading Israeli choreographers who have shaped Israel's renowned modern dance scene. The documentary was cosponsored by the **Rutgers Dance Department**, which frequently hosts Israeli choreographers. A group of Rutgers dance students attended both the screening and a talk by **Judith Brin Ingber** from the University of Minnesota's Department of Theatre Arts and Dance.

The documentary *Sukkah City*, about the 2010 international design competition of the same name, showcases the contemporary architects and designers challenged to reimagine the ancient structure within traditional parameters and construct their sukkahs in New York's Union Square for public viewing. Both film director **Jason Hutt** and competition cofounder **Joshua Foer** participated in a lively post-film discussion. **David and Sylvia Steiner**, steadfast supporters of the festival, sponsored the screening.

When the Nazis invaded Albania, its predominantly Muslim population did not betray even one Jew, including refugees from other countries who sought shelter there. Few, however, know of this heroism. *Besa: The Promise*, the documentary that closed the festival, poignantly brings the story to light with a message that resonates powerfully today. The festival was honored to host photographer **Norman Gershman**, whose research provided the basis for the film; producer **Jason Williams**; and **Johanna Neumann**, who spoke about her family's experience hiding "in plain sight" in Albania during the war.

The festival ran from October 24 to November 3, once again giving New Jersey audiences local access to cutting-edge international cinema with a focus on the Jewish experience. Thanks to the generosity of the **Karma Foundation** and a devoted circle of patrons, the festival screened an exciting roster of fifteen feature and documentary films, including five New Jersey premieres.



Karen Small,
Sharon Karmazin,
and Yael Zerubavel



High school students at the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

Film Screening Expands Holocaust Education for Students

For the first time in the history of the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**, nearly 200 students from three New Jersey high schools attended with their history and Holocaust education teachers. The Bildner Center invited them to a free screening of *No Place on Earth*, a documentary about Jews who hid from the Nazis in Ukraine's subterranean cave network.

Lesley Thomson and **Jordan Siegel**, participants in the **Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education (MTI)**, helped organize the event, which gave students a meaningful opportunity to watch the film in a movie theater and then engage in a dialogue via Skype with **Christopher Nicola**, who uncovered the incredible story. It brought the Holocaust out of the realm of the textbook, enabling the students to connect on a human level with the survivors portrayed in the film.

Thomson, who recently created a course on genocide and Holocaust studies at **Barnegat High School**, an isolated shore community, said the experience has broadened her students' horizons. After viewing the film, the students expressed their awe at how quickly those forced to hide in the caves adjusted to the challenges in order to save their lives.

Siegel, a guidance counselor at **Abraham Clark High School** in Roselle, has steadily developed a broad Holocaust curriculum for a student body that is largely African-American. The study of the Holocaust has been eye-opening for them. "They were blown away by the power of the will to live portrayed in the film," says Siegel.

Students in **Heather Mendoza's** honors history class at **Golda Och Academy**, a Jewish day school in West Orange, found the fact that a non-Jew had brought this story of survival to light fascinating. At least one student even insisted that her parents see the film during the festival.

Siegel and Thomson believe that the film still resonates. It has helped Siegel further his overall agenda: to have students connect the dots between the Holocaust, African-American history, and social justice issues in the United States today. For Thomson, the film's impact became most apparent when, during last year's harsh winter, her students kept asking, "How did those families survive the cold in the cave?"

Program on Jews and Food in Memory of Joan Bildner

On October 8, 2013, friends and family gathered at Rutgers to celebrate the life and memory of **Joan Bildner**, who passed away last summer. Joan, and her husband, **Allen**, established the Center in 1996 and had both been instrumental in its success over the years.

Following a dinner reception with Bildner family, close friends, and Jewish studies faculty, the Bildner Center convened a panel for a public discussion, "**Jews and Food: Tradition, Sustainability, and Health.**" At the public memorial tribute, Joan was remembered by Rutgers President Emeritus **Richard McCormick**, Bildner Center Director **Yael Zerubavel**, and **Robert Bildner**, who spoke lovingly of his mother and the relevance of the evening's theme to their family's long involvement with it. Multiple generations of the Bildner family have been leaders in the food business and involved with food and health issues as food writers, organic gardeners, chefs, and philanthropists concerned about world hunger.

The panelists were **Nigel Savage**, executive director of Hazon; Professor **Jennifer Berg**, New York University; and Professor **Jordan Rosenblum**, University of Wisconsin. The program explored the intersection of Jewish tradition and contemporary concerns about food and its relationship to local and global health. The discussion ranged from the contents of contemporary Jews' refrigerators, to concerns over passing traditions on to the next generation, to Jews' involvement with environmental issues.

The event was cosponsored by the Rutgers **GAIA Centers' Biennial Theme: *Global Health!***



Back Row: **Elisa Spungen Bildner** and **Robert Bildner**. Seated: **Yael Zerubavel** and **Allen Bildner**

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS



Hillsborough High School students perform the bottle dance from *Fiddler* at the Bildner Center program.



Alisa Solomon

The Cultural Legacy of *Fiddler on the Roof*

Since its blockbuster Broadway debut in 1964, *Fiddler on the Roof* has been seized for an astonishing range of cultural purposes. Professor **Alisa Solomon** of Columbia University explored the remarkable power of this beloved musical and its ongoing influence on popular culture and religion around the globe, in the

Bildner Center's annual **Abram Matlofsky Memorial Program**, funded by the **Karma Foundation**. An intergenerational audience of about 250, including community, faculty, and college and high school students, gathered for the program in March.

Solomon's talk, based on her new book, *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of "Fiddler on the Roof,"* traced the theatrical history and evolution of *Fiddler*, from the Yiddish stage, to the golden age of Broadway musicals, to a major Hollywood motion picture. *Fiddler* is a story that tells of a century-long cultural transformation, adaptation, and assimilation. It was the first public work that called forth the Old Country with affection, rather than mocking or parodying it.

Solomon traced how the stories of Teyve the milkman, by the Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem, found new life as a hugely successful musical and a cultural touchstone for both Jews and non-Jews around the world. In 1971 the film was released, and by 1974 the musical had been performed in two dozen countries. Solomon described the significance of *Fiddler*, one of the longest-running shows on Broadway, as "much more than a musical." Its songs have been performed at religious

rituals as well as included in hip-hop hits. It has inspired both secular satire and religious conversion. Praised as one of the best works for Broadway, it has also been looked on as a historical document.

Even though the musical reflects Jewish culture in Eastern Europe and the struggle to maintain tradition, it is highly relatable regardless of the viewer's cultural background or religion. Solomon presented a range of contemporary references that utilize the image and music of *Fiddler on the Roof* to promote cultural and commercial products with no direct relevance to its subject.

The enduring appeal of *Fiddler* was clearly demonstrated at the Bildner Center's event itself, when thirty-four cast members of the award-winning **Hillsborough High School Theatre Program** performed a medley of songs from their spring production of the musical, encouraging the audience to sing along. Their theater director, **Bernard J. Solomon** (no relation to the professor), who had drawn on Alisa Solomon's book in preparing the students for the production, noted how quickly and fully his largely non-Jewish teenage cast members came to relate to the material.

Spirituality and Health Explored

In recent years, researchers have provided compelling scientific evidence that spirituality and religious ritual can directly and positively affect our health and well-being, and may point to a truly integrative model of health and healing for the twenty-first century. On December 4, the Bildner Center convened a panel of experts to explore the interplay between spirituality and health from religious and medical perspectives.

A diverse crowd of more than 200 gathered at the Douglass Campus Center to hear Rabbi **David Ellenson**, then president (now chancellor) and I. H. and Anna Grancell Professor of Jewish Religious Thought at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC), and Dr. **Jeff Levin**, University Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health and director of the Program on Religion and Population Health at the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University. The talk, "**Spirituality and Health**," was moderated by Professor **Deborah Carr**, chair of the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University and a faculty member at the Rutgers

Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research.

Ellenson, who has been instrumental in advancing pastoral care studies at HUC, discussed a range of Jewish texts, from the Old Testament to the Talmud, to support the connection between Judaism, spirituality, and health. Levin, whose work at the interface of religion, science, and medicine has been influential in broadening the perspectives of researchers and clinicians on how body, mind, and spirit are connected, illuminated the multifaceted and long-standing connections between Judaism and medicine, health, and health care. His talk included examples from Jewish law (Halakha), Jewish bioethics, the Jewish healing movement, and interest in kabbalah and meditation, and related them to research on the impact of Jewish spirituality on health.

The program was supported in part by the **Sagner Family Foundation** and cosponsored by the Rutgers **GAIA Centers' 2013–2015 Biennial Theme: Global Health!** as well as Rutgers' **Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research**.

The Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center

Holocaust Education Inspires Exciting Changes in Curricula

After French teacher **Victoria Kessler** first took courses on teaching the Holocaust, she decided to integrate a Holocaust unit into her curriculum at **Somerville High School**, using France's complex history during the war as a starting point.

When a colleague told her about the Bildner Center's **Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education (MTI)**, she seized the chance to learn more about the subject. Kessler (RU'96) graduated from the MTI in 2011 and continues to attend workshops as an alumna.

"The MTI really opened my eyes and brought everything to life," recalls Kessler.

Like Kessler, **Gene Woods** was also drawn to the powerful lessons of the Holocaust. A teacher of American and world history at **Bayonne High School**, he has long incorporated those messages from the past into curricula for his multiethnic student body.

"No matter how far removed from current events, the Holocaust always seemed to relate to whatever I was teaching," says Woods, who learned about the MTI from his former social studies department supervisor.

He believes that "it truly all started" when he read Elie Wiesel's *Night*, which motivated him to secure a copy for each of his students. That quest set off the chain reaction that led him to develop a new elective class, "**Facing History and Ourselves: The Holocaust and Human Behavior**." The "MTI's enormous resources," he notes, "were particularly supportive of this process." The course encourages students to embrace their new knowledge of the Holocaust and use it for good through a journey of self-discovery. Class size has doubled since Woods began teaching it last year.

Woods recently completed the three-year advanced track of the MTI and received the designation "Master Teacher," which requires participants to take four Holocaust education courses through the MTI as well as the summer course, "Introduction to the History of the Holocaust." In addition, teachers must complete a project that enhances Holocaust or tolerance education for their school, district, or community.

For Kessler too, the MTI enabled her to launch her big idea forward. The curriculum she developed models tolerance, a lesson that resonates in her diverse district. After a lengthy approval process, she received the go-ahead to teach "Human Conscience" as an elective in fall 2014.

Because "all shades of humanity can be found within the study of the Holocaust," Kessler believes that her students always find something that makes the topic personally



relevant. Her students have learned an important lesson on what can occur when individuals lack tolerance, and as a result she demands greater respect by the students for one another.

As Woods observes, "The most important piece I've taken away from the MTI is that no one can know everything about a subject so vast." That is where the open dialogue among participating teachers comes in to play, and it continues after they have all left the most recent workshop.

"We infuse a freshness into one another's teaching of the Holocaust," Kessler adds. "The MTI is so much more than it claims to be."

The MTI is offered through the auspices of the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center** and under the guidance of Bildner Center Associate Director **Karen Small** and the faculty adviser, Professor **Paul Hanebrink**. Through intensive workshops, the program develops expert Holocaust studies teachers who serve as resources in their schools, districts, and communities.



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

This educator training project has been supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

Additional support provided by:

The Marjorie and Egon Berg Holocaust Education Fund
and
The Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences

Donor Support Appreciated

Leadership Gifts:

Estate of Lillian Smith Glasser for a bequest gift to establish the **Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and Lillian Glasser Endowment** for student scholarships in Jewish studies.

The Marion and Norman Tanzman Charitable Foundation, and its president, **Jeffries Shein** RC'62, and trustee **Roy Tanzman** RC'73, CLAW'76, for its generous support of Jewish studies.

The Karma Foundation, led by **Sharon Karmazin** DC'67, SC&I'69 and **Dina Elkins**, for its commitment to Jewish culture through a grant to the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**.

Andrew J. Melnick RC'63, RBSG'70 for his ongoing support of Israel studies at Rutgers.

Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany for a matching grant to support the **Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education**.

Robert M. Steinberg RC'67 for his ongoing support of the Bildner Center.

Maurice "Pete" Meyer III RC'56 and **Irma Meyer** for an additional gift to their student scholarship fund.

Shelley and Steven Einhorn RC'70 for sponsoring a film in the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**.

Alan S. Friedman LC'87 for his new gift to fund Holocaust education for schoolteachers.

Eugene Gottlieb RC'56, RBSG'64, GSNB'71 and his wife, **Ruth**, for their support of the Bildner Center.

The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation for its continued support of the Department of Jewish Studies **Curriculum Enhancement Fund**.

Additional Significant Gifts:

Dr. Barry and Deborah Adler
Adele Meyer Brodtkin
Vicki Koppleman Cabot and
Howard Ross Cabot
David Greene
Henrietta and John Kessler
Lee and Lanny Livingston
Elizabeth and David Lowenstein
H. Herbert Myers Foundation
Betty and Arthur Roswell
Stolzer Family Foundation / Toby Stolzer
Aaron Wasserman
Lee and Judith Wasserman
Donna and Steven Weiss

We are grateful for the generosity of all our supporters.

Gifts to Rutgers University can be directed to the Bildner Center through several venues, including grants, bequests, and charitable gift annuities.

For more information, contact **Paul Kuznekoff** at 848-932-6457.

In Memoriam

Adelaide (Marcus) Zagoren was a valued member of the Bildner Center's Leadership Committee. She saw great value in strengthening Rutgers students' ties to Jewish studies. Adelaide's involvement as president of the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation was an important factor in the establishment of the Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History at Rutgers, held by Professor Gary A. Rendsburg. Born and raised in New Brunswick, she was a graduate of Rutgers' New Jersey College for Women, later Douglass College. Adelaide began her career as a journalist for the New Brunswick *Home News*, and later she worked with the United Way of New Jersey and the Raritan Valley Girl Scouts Council. She served as executive director of the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College for twenty-six years and remained closely connected to Rutgers. Honored by many organizations, she was inducted into the Rutgers University Hall of Distinguished Alumni and received the Rutgers University Medal.

Dr. Eva B. Bamberger Stahl, a Highland Park resident, was a generous supporter of the Bildner Center and a regular attendee at the Center's events. As a child, Eva was sent out of Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport; she was reunited with her family in Belgium in 1942, and they arrived in the United States two years later. Eva and

her husband, Ted, provided funding for the Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education. Eva was a graduate of the New Jersey College for Women, later Douglass College, and Women's Medical College of Philadelphia. She practiced dermatology for forty-eight years and served as chair of dermatology at both Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and St. Peter's University Hospital. Eva was a lifelong member of the Highland Park Conservative Temple–Congregation Anshe Emeth and a life member of the board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County.

Rabbi Yakov Hilsenrath played a major role in building the Jewish community of Middlesex County. An advocate of lifelong learning, Rabbi Hilsenrath and his wife, Devorah, were regular attendees at Bildner Center programs and were involved with the Center's launch of an interfaith dialogue program in 2008. Hilsenrath served as spiritual leader of the Highland Park Conservative Temple for thirty years and earned numerous awards for excellence and innovation in Jewish education and outreach. He was known for his multi-denominational outreach, relating to Jews of every affiliation as well as non-Jews.

STUDENT NEWS

Jewish Studies Graduates, 2014

Majors

Jacob M. Binstein
Gabriel S. Cohen
Rachel Wetter
Pnina Zunger

Minors

Nava J. Frankel
Avigayil Lieber
Ariel M. Lubow
Danielle A. Pedersen
Blair N. Singer
Sarah R. Stuby
Stephanie L. Thomas

Hebrew-Language Minor

Lauren R. Koenig



Amy Weiss Awarded Fellowship

Amy Weiss, Rutgers College '05, who graduated with a B.A. in Jewish studies and sociology, was awarded a 2014 **Sid and Ruth Lapidus Summer Fellowship** by the **American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS)**. The award supports young scholars wishing to use the collections of the AJHS to further their research. Weiss is a doctoral candidate in the joint Ph.D. program in Hebrew and Judaic studies and history at New York University.

Alumni Reflections

Scott Roland reflects on the influence of Jewish studies on his career path as a rabbi:

My involvement with the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers was an essential marker on my path toward a lifetime of learning, teaching, and Jewish communal service. My first course, "Medieval Jewish Philosophy" with Rabbi Dr. Leonard Levin, introduced me not only to a world of academic Jewish study but also to an environment where classmates became community and instructors cared like family. Professors Jeffrey Shandler and Azzan Yadin-Israel were eager to go the extra mile to encourage bringing learning to life. When I asked them to partner with Rutgers Hillel for a series of trips to explore Jewish landmarks in Manhattan, they gladly accepted. Lily Levy and the Hebrew faculty literally gave me the words to communicate with millions of Hebrew speakers worldwide.

Since graduating from Rutgers in 2005, I have spent the majority of my time studying and sharing Jewish life and history with anyone who is willing to learn. After three years in informal youth education, I made my way to the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts. In addition to rabbinic ordination, I worked toward an M.A. in Jewish education and focused on learning how to create effective twenty-first-century Jewish classrooms. I spent time experimenting in rabbinic and educational settings throughout New England. Since my ordination in June 2013, I have served the community of Temple Hatikvah in Flanders, New Jersey. It is great to be back in New Jersey and to benefit from the love and support of the Jewish community that started me along my path.

—Rabbi Scott Roland



Tal Grebel describes how her postgraduate studies in Europe led her to European and Jewish history at Harvard:

After graduating from Rutgers in 2011 with a double major in history and French, and a minor in Jewish studies, I came to France. Pulled by the smell of fresh bread, and the taste of a unique language on my tongue, I had come for a year, to immerse myself in the culture and teach English. That was three years ago.

In the fall of 2012, I began a master's program at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* in Paris. I had missed school. Perhaps my break from formal studies led me to follow (what I now realize was) a crazy idea: well into my first year, my professor innocently asked me if I'd like to apply to the school's Franco-German program. I had never studied a word of German before. I taught myself German, applied, was accepted into the program, spent August in Berlin to become fluent, and spent the next year at Heidelberg University.

In the fall of 2014, I have the privilege of continuing my studies at Harvard University. There, as a doctoral student, I plan to continue my master's degree work on nineteenth-century European and Jewish history. I am especially fascinated by Jewish assimilation into French and German high society.

—Tal Grebel



ALUMNI: Please keep us informed of your activities at csjl@rci.rutgers.edu.

STUDENT NEWS

Students Make Their Mark across University



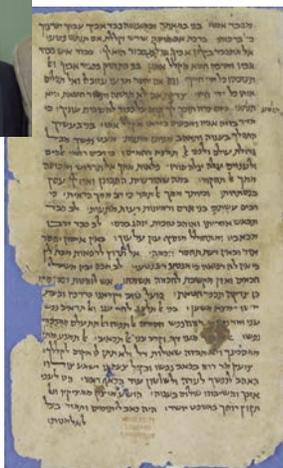
Rachel Wetter '14 won two awards this year through the Department of History at Rutgers: the **James Reed Award**, for the best thesis at the department's annual Honors Conference, and the **Daniel Horn Award**, for the best thesis on a Jewish history topic. A double major in Jewish studies and history, Rachel wrote her thesis on women and the negotiation of gender in the General Jewish Workers Labor Bund. The thesis was supervised by history professor **Melissa Feinberg**, with Professor **Nancy Sinkoff** as a second reader. In 2013, Rachel was awarded the **Adler International Study Scholarship** by the Department of Jewish Studies to attend a two-month study program in Prague and Kraków run by the Department of Art History's Cultural Heritage and Preservation Studies. She describes her experiences there:

This program allowed me to study the complicated questions of heritage preservation in two cities with long and complex histories. As a Jewish studies major, I was particularly interested in how these cities interact today with the heritage of their formerly large Jewish populations. I got to see firsthand what has been done with the material remains of the old Jewish neighborhoods in Prague and Kraków, as well as to visit the former concentration camps Terezin and Auschwitz and discuss how sites of painful memory fit into a country's heritage. Interning with the ten-day Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków, I learned more about how the Jewish community today is seeking to preserve the lost community's immaterial heritage of traditions and art forms, as well as creating its own new traditions. I had the opportunity to discuss what I observed with both my fellow classmates and professionals in the field. It was an inspiring and invaluable experience!



JTS manuscript ENA 2536: Ben Sira MS A I Recto (used by kind permission of The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)

www.bensira.org



Sarah R. Stuby '14 received a **Henry Rutgers Scholar Award** for her thesis on the zodiac motif found in synagogue mosaics from Eretz Israel in late antiquity. An art history major and Jewish studies and psychology minor, Sarah had her work supervised by art history professor **Erik Thuno**, with Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg** as a second reader. The **Klein Award for Study in Israel** from the Department of Jewish Studies allowed Sarah to travel and research her topic. She recounts her visit:



I traveled to visit the sites of the Hammat Tiberias, Sepphoris, and Bet Alfa synagogues, located in the Lower Galilee, as they were the primary subjects of my paper. I was fortunate enough to visit these sites with archaeologists who work there, gaining further insight into my up-close observations of the mosaics. I also traveled to Ein Gedi, where I was able to visit a synagogue containing inscriptions of the zodiac as well as to traverse the scenic hiking trails. I also enjoyed Bet She'an National Park, a large excavated Byzantine city, which allowed me to gain a broader sense of the context of life in the Byzantine period. In Jerusalem, I visited the Israel Museum (where my study abroad adviser took me behind the scenes) and the Bible Lands Museum, and I explored smaller archaeological sites in the Old City. I am extremely fortunate and grateful for the opportunity the Klein Award has given me. My time exploring Israel on my own was amazing. Not only did I get to explore my personal academic interests, but I became more independent as a result of the experience.

Jacob M. Binstein '14 won a **Henry Rutgers Scholar Award** for his thesis and website related to the book of Ben Sira. His thesis was supervised by Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**, with Professor **Azzan Yadin-Israel** as a second reader. Rendsburg and Binstein, a double major in Jewish studies and information technology, launched a new website, which brings together into a single platform the ancient and medieval Hebrew manuscripts of the book of Ben Sira (ca. 180 BCE). The documents were found at Qumran, Masada, and the Cairo Geniza; are housed in diverse locations around the world; but are presented on the website, in a convenient user-friendly format.

Jacob, winner of the 2013 **Wasserman Research Award** and the 2014 **Meyer Student Award**, always knew that he wanted to study a computer-related field, but he did not expect to fall in love with Jewish studies and declare a double major. He remembers fondly a class on the Dead Sea Scrolls, taught by Rendsburg, in which he found himself fascinated by the mysteries of the manuscripts. Jacob is now spending a year in Israel studying the Talmud, Jewish life, and Jewish philosophy. He plans to apply to Israeli graduate programs and ultimately to use his computer skills within the Israeli army.

Student Award Recipients, 2014

Sarah Baron '15
Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award

Emily Bernstein (graduate student)
Betty and Julius Gillman Memorial Award

Jacob M. Binstein '14
Maurice Meyer III and Irma Meyer Award

Joshua Blachorsky '15
Deborah S. and Herbert B. Wasserman Research Award

Gabriel S. Cohen '14
Ruth Feller Rosenberg Award

Nava J. Frankel '14
Louis Fishman Memorial Award

Aaron London '15
Harold and Betty Perl Award

Ariel M. Lubow '14
Norma U. and David M. Levitt Award

AWARDS FOR STUDY IN ISRAEL

Jamie LaBue,
Graduate School of Social Work
Nisan Novack '14
Sarah R. Stuby '14
Herbert and Jacqueline Klein Award for Study in Israel

Mouna Jaouad '16
Margolin Family Award for Study in Israel

Jordan Davis '16
Barry and Deborah Venezia Adler International Study Award



Celebrating Our Graduates

On May 6, Rutgers students were recognized for their academic achievements in Jewish studies at the annual awards ceremony hosted by the Bildner Center and the Department of Jewish Studies. Families, faculty, and friends joined the students to celebrate at the festive reception and program held at Brower Commons.

In addition to awards for outstanding achievement in Jewish studies, grants were awarded both to undergraduates and to graduate students for study in Israel, and for a student research project. The event also celebrated graduating seniors in the Jewish studies department, as well as the first graduate of the Rutgers Master's Program in Jewish Studies.

Three student presentations at the event highlighted the diversity of interest and research in Jewish studies.

In his Jewish studies honors thesis, **Gabriel S. Cohen '14** explored historical and contemporary instances of satirical treatment of Adolf Hitler in popular culture. Gabe is planning to pursue a graduate degree in Jewish studies.

Jacob M. Binstein '14 discussed his research on the medieval book of Ben Sira and the website www.bensira.org, which he launched with Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**. (See page 12 for more on this project.)

Emily Bernstein's graduate research project, "Memory and Identity: The Adult Children of Intermarriage and Their Narratives," delved into Jewish identity issues. Emily's work consists of a series of in-depth interviews with individuals who grew up with one Jewish parent and one parent of another cultural-religious or ethnic origin. She is conducting a personal narrative analysis of these interviews to shed light on how these young adults potentially reference and use memory in the formation of their identity.

For photos and to learn more about our award winners, visit JewishStudies.rutgers.edu.

► NEW BOOK ON SHTETL from page 1

Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History, part of the Key Words in Jewish Studies series (Rutgers University Press, 2014), traces the trajectory of writing about these towns—by Jews and non-Jews, residents and visitors, researchers, novelists, memoirists, journalists, and others—to demonstrate how the Yiddish word for town emerged as a key term in Jewish

culture and studies. Shandler proposes that the intellectual history of the shtetl is best approached as an exemplar of engaging Jewish vernacular, and that the variable nature of this engagement, far from being a drawback, is central to the subject's enduring interest.

—Adapted from the
Rutgers University Press website

FACULTY UPDATES

Gary A. Rendsburg saw two major projects to completion. First, the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* was published (Brill), both in print and in an online edition. Rendsburg served as one of the six associate editors for this major reference work, and he authored or coauthored sixteen of the entries. Second, together with Jewish studies honors student Jacob M. Binstein, Rendsburg launched www.bensira.org, a website devoted to presenting the Hebrew manuscript tradition of the ancient book of Ben Sira to the public at large (see page 12). Rendsburg presented lectures at the following conferences: 11th Mainz International Colloquium on Ancient Hebrew, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz; 7th International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira, University of Strasbourg, France; “A Consultation on the Historicity and Authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness Traditions in a

Post Modern Age,” Lanier Theological Library, Houston; and “A Literary Creation: Literary Approaches to the Book of Genesis,” Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. He also delivered the 14th Annual Yedida Kalfon Stillman Memorial Lecture at the University of Oklahoma. His essay “Variation in Biblical Hebrew Prose and Poetry” appeared in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and Near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin* (University Press of Maryland).

Jeffrey Shandler concluded his term as president of the Association for Jewish Studies. He published the following: *Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History* (Rutgers University Press) (see page 1); “Holocaust Survivors on Schindler’s List; or, Reading a Digital Archive against the Grain,” in *American Literature*; and “The Visitor’s Gaze Revisited: On American Jews’

Films of Travels to Interwar Poland,” in the exhibition catalogue *Letters to Afar*, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw. He gave the following talks: “Greeting the Season: The December Dilemma in American Jewish Popular Culture,” University of Southern California; “Seeing as Believing: Regarding the Spectacle in Holocaust Survivor Videos,” 45th annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, Boston; “Behold the Vanished World: Visions of Pre-War East European Jewish Life in the Wake of the Holocaust” at the “Conference on Absorbing Encounters: Constructing American Jewry in the Post-Holocaust Decades,” University of Maryland; “Absolut Tchochke: Materializing the Mother Tongue,” Muhlenberg College; “Anne Frank: From Diary to Book,” State University of New York at Albany; and “The Anne Frank Phenomenon,” Sydney Jewish Museum. Shandler also participated in a roundtable, “The Future of

Jewish Studies: New Directions, Theoretical Considerations, and Professional Advice,” Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, Columbia University. As Kronhill Visiting Scholar in Yiddish Culture, Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, Melbourne, Shandler gave a series of lectures on contemporary Yiddish culture, Holocaust media, and the remembrance of prewar Eastern European Jewish life.

Nancy Sinkoff was on research and sabbatical leave last year, but she introduced and moderated the discussion of the documentary *Hannah Arendt* at the 14th annual Rutgers Jewish Film Festival. She published the entry on Lucy S. Dawidowicz in the *American National Biography*, edited by Susan Ware (Oxford University Press), anb.org/articles/16/16-03574.html; and “Sisters and Strangers: Hannah Arendt & Lucy Dawidowicz,” in *Heritage* (Winter 2014). She continued to consult on the eighteenth-

Jewish Studies Faculty, 2014–2015

Core Faculty

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

*graduate director

**undergraduate director

Associated Faculty

Debra Ballentine
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

Instructor

Hilit Surowitz-Israel

Part-time Lecturers

Edward Portnoy
Elliot Ratzman

Language Instructors

Orly Moshenberg,
*Hebrew-Language
Coordinator*
Edna Bryn-Noiman

Bildner Center Visiting Scholars

Galeet J. Dardashti
New York University.
Reitman Visiting
Scholar, fall 2014

Aviva Halamish
Open University
of Israel.
Visiting Scholar,
2014–2015

century gallery of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews (Warsaw), which will open officially in October 2014.

Paola Tartakoff gave the following lectures: “Testing Boundaries: Jewish Conversion and Iberian Exceptionalism” at a colloquium, “Jewish Studies in Iberia and the Mediterranean,” Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, Columbia University; “Marriage and Conversion to and from Judaism in Medieval Europe” at the annual Association for Jewish Studies conference in Boston; “Conspiring against the Inquisition: A Tale of Revenge in Medieval Spain,” and a faculty seminar, at the University of Connecticut; and “Fear of Conversion to Judaism in Thirteenth-Century Christian Segregatory Legislation,” International Conference of the Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheba, Israel. She also gave a talk on medieval conversion, at Tel Aviv University. Tartakoff continued to serve as the undergraduate director of the Department of Jewish Studies, she advised undergraduate and graduate research, and her teaching load included a new honors seminar titled “Muslims, Christians and Jews: Conflict and Coexistence.” She also taught an evening course for adults, “Jewish-Christian Relations through the Ages,” in the Jewish Theological Seminary Context Program.

Azzan Yadin-Israel published the following: “Rabbinic Polysemy: A Response to Steven Fraade,” in *AJS Review* (April 2014); “Qabbalah, Deuteriosis, and Semantic Incommensurability: A

Preliminary Study,” in *Envisioning Judaism*, the Peter Schäfer Festschrift; and two entries—“Contact of Hebrew with Other Languages” and “Neologism”—in the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (Brill). He presented a talk at the Society of Biblical Literature’s annual conference, on the identity of the fruit of the biblical Tree of Knowledge; and he was one of the speakers at a smaller conference at the University of California, Berkeley, dedicated to the scholarship of Daniel Boyarin, where he gave the talk “Authorial Intent: Human and Divine.” He also supervised an Aresty Research Fellow, with whom he worked on the later dialogues of Plato, and taught a Byrne Seminar titled “The Theology of Bruce Springsteen.” He continued to serve as the coeditor of the book series *Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Ancient Judaism*.

Yael Zerubavel published the article “‘Numerical Commemoration’ and the Challenges of Collective Remembrance in Israel,” in *History & Memory* (Spring/Summer 2014). She organized a yearlong faculty research seminar, “Contested Memories and the Politics of Change,” and a year-end conference, “Contested Memories and the Contours of the Past,” at which she presented the talk “History and Space Metaphors: Contested Memories in Israeli Popular Culture.” She participated in the Israel Institute’s “Methodology Conference: Mission Critical Questions,” at the Schusterman Family Foundation in Washington, D.C.;

and presented a seminar paper, “The Desert, the Island, and the Wall: Space Metaphors in Israeli Culture,” for the faculty of the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, University of Oxford. She also delivered a David Patterson Seminar, “The ‘Return to the Bible’ in Popular Israeli Culture,” for the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, England; and a paper, “Memory and Identity in Israeli Culture: Historical Reflections,” at a conference titled “The Zionist Ideal in Israeli Culture: Dream and Reality” at Northwestern University. During a visit to Case Western Reserve University’s Laura and Alvin Siegal Lifelong Learning Program, she delivered a lecture, “The Desert as a Symbolic Landscape: Memory, Ecology, and Tourism,” as part of the Association for Jewish Studies’ Distinguished Lectureship Program, and an additional lecture titled “Israeli Culture and Ethnic Traditions.” She also participated in a roundtable, “Teaching Israel and Related Topics in American Universities,” at the annual conference of the Association for Israel Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Sde Boker, Israel. She continued to serve on the advisory boards of the academic journals and presses *Israel Studies*, *Israel Studies Review*, *Journal of Israeli History*, *AJS Perspectives*, and *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds*; the Rutgers University Press series *Jewish Cultures of the World*; and the Academic Studies Press series *Israel: Society, Culture, and History*. She also continued to serve on Rutgers University’s Advisory Council on Jewish Student Life and on the New Jersey–Israel Commission of the State of New Jersey.

Faculty Seminars

The Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar

Jeffrey K. Olick, chair of the Department of Sociology and a professor of history at the University of Virginia, presented the keynote lecture, “Systems of Memory: Beyond the Matryoshka Doll,” to a gathering of fifty scholars at the Bildner Center’s interdisciplinary conference, “Contested Memories and the Contours of the Past.” He discussed the evolution of the field of social memory studies from a model of often oversimplified dichotomies—individual versus collective memory, official versus vernacular memory, and so on—to a vastly more complex model that recognizes the interplay of multiple levels of memory, including personal, familial, local, national, regional, and global.

Additional faculty seminars:

Aleksandra Bunčić, Visiting Fulbright Scholar: “The Interplay of Text and Image: Depicting God’s Presence in the Sarajevo Haggadah.” (See page 3 for more information.)

Alisse Waterston, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York: “Memory and Method in Intimate Ethnography: *My Father’s Wars*.” *Cosponsored by the Rutgers Department of Anthropology*.

Carol Zemel, Bildner Visiting Scholar: “Rites of Return: Yael Bartana’s Polish Trilogy: *And Europe Will Be Stunned*.”

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu

- Lectures, seminars, and conferences
- Rutgers Jewish Film Festival
- Holocaust education / teacher workshops
- Free online courses

Department of Jewish Studies JewishStudies.rutgers.edu

- Major / minor in Jewish studies
- Graduate program
- Renowned Jewish studies faculty

Phone: 848-932-2033
Email: csjl@rci.rutgers.edu



SUPPORT JEWISH STUDIES AT RUTGERS!
All gifts are greatly appreciated.

RUTGERS

School of Arts and Sciences

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center
for the Study of Jewish Life
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
12 College Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
New Brunswick, NJ
Permit no. 157

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Lecture

Inventing Odessa: Jewish Culture on the Edge of the Russian Empire

Olga Litvak, Clark University
September 14, 3:00 p.m.

Guided tours of art exhibit **Odessa's
Second Avant-Garde: City and Myth**
available at 2:00 and 4:15 p.m.

Cosponsored by the Zimmerli Art Museum

Sara Levy's World: Music, Gender, and Judaism in Enlightenment Berlin

Concert

September 29, 7:30 p.m.

International symposium

September 30, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

*Cosponsored by Mason Gross School of the
Arts, the School of Arts and Sciences, and
the Center for European Studies*

The Richard D. Heffner Open Mind Lecture in Communications and Human Values

Dr. Ruth: Refugee, Scholar, Media Icon, American Sex Therapist

October 22, 7:00 p.m.

*Sponsored by the School of Arts and Sciences
Honors Program*

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

October 29–November 9

Ticket sales begin September 30.

The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Program Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter

Jonathan Gribetz, Princeton University
November 18, 7:30 p.m.

Hanukkah in America

Dianne Ashton, Rowan University

December 10, 7:30 p.m.

Supported by the Sagner Family Foundation

Professional Development for Teachers

Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education

Fall topic: "Revisiting Key Events in
Holocaust History"

Spring topic: "Justice after the Holocaust
and Rwanda"

Advance registration required.

Jewish Studies Online



FREE

Explore Jewish history
and culture from your home.

**THE BIBLE • RABBINIC LITERATURE
ISRAELI POLITICS • JEWS UNDER ISLAM
THE INQUISITION AND THE JEWS**

Easy registration on our website:
BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu

*Made possible by a generous gift
from Gene Hoffman.*

GO GREEN:
Send us an email
to update your
address or switch
to email only.

