

# Jewish Studies at Rutgers

Number 21, Fall 2017

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

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**Yael Zerubavel, Jeffries Shein, Roy Tanzman, and Richard Edwards**



## Tanzman Hall Enhances Jewish Studies

The Bildner Center dedicated the new **Marion and Norman Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning** in a special ceremony held on September 18, 2016. About ninety guests participated in the opening event, among them Tanzman family members and **Marion and Norman Tanzman Charitable Foundation** officers, Department of Jewish Studies faculty, and Bildner Center leadership. **Richard Edwards**, then Rutgers chancellor, and **Peter March**, executive dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, attended on behalf of the university.

Tanzman Hall was established with a \$1 million gift from the Marion and Norman Tanzman Charitable Foundation under the stewardship of the foundation's president, **Jeffries Shein** RC'62, and trustee **Roy Tanzman** RC'73, CLAW'76.

The newly designed venue is located in Miller Hall, adjacent to the Bildner Center on College Avenue. Several years ago, one part of the building was converted into offices for Jewish studies faculty. A generous gift from the Tanzman family made it possible to renovate the remaining unused space.

During the dedication, Shein noted that the foundation's aim in supporting the Bildner Center and the Jewish studies department is to create

more space for teaching and various other educational activities.

The university, which is committed to values of diversity and prides itself on serving as a center of learning for students of all faiths, threw its support behind the project as well. It provided the funds to replace the roof, which had been in a state of decay.



**Roy and Brenda Tanzman with Rona and Jeffries Shein**

Tanzman Hall now houses a fifty-seat multipurpose room and a twenty-seat classroom, both equipped with the latest technology.

Bildner Center director **Yael Zerubavel** says that "the newly renovated and elegantly designed space, located so close to the Center and the faculty offices, has transformed the experience of learning. It provides a welcoming venue for the Center's unique educational programs and for Jewish studies classes."

Roy Tanzman, a nephew of Marion and Norman Tanzman, says he is proud of the way "the new space enhances Jewish programming at Rutgers, which has the largest Jewish student population of any college in the country."

The end-of-year celebration for Jewish studies students, faculty, and guests was held in Tanzman Hall for the first time this past June. The Center also used the space for its concurrent summer courses in Holocaust education for teachers.

Students have also eagerly embraced the facilities at Tanzman Hall, praising it for its smart technology features and comfortable atmosphere. A cozy furnished lounge was added during the renovation, providing a relaxing space where students meet before and after class.

## Director's Desk



When I chose to focus my research on Israeli society and culture as a graduate student, I did not think of my field as “Israel studies,” mostly because no such field existed. This past June, while attending the 33rd annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies (AIS), I felt in a more compelling way than before the impact of the remarkable development of Israel studies as an academic field.

When I first joined the AIS (established in 1985), its annual meeting was just a small gathering of a few dozen scholars. At the time, the idea of “Israel studies” was met with broad skepticism not only in the United States but also in Israel, where different aspects of the study of the country’s history, society, and culture were incorporated into various disciplinary fields. In the Israeli academy, studying these topics was taken for granted, and the overarching concept of Israel studies seemed superfluous.

In time, the AIS has expanded its ranks and its annual meetings, which alternate between the United States and Israel and have grown into full-fledged academic conferences extending over three days. As new cohorts of scholars joined the association, Israel studies grew to include a more diverse cadre of international scholars and graduate students with broad interdisciplinary training.

The study of Israel has become part of the curriculum in American universities, and select European and Israeli universities have also established Israel studies programs. Several academic journals and book series are devoted to this burgeoning field, providing avenues for the publication of new scholarship.

Rutgers’ involvement in Israel studies began when Myron “Mike” Aronoff, then a faculty member in political science and anthropology, was the AIS founding president, and sociologist Chaim Waxman and I served as board members. Two years after the establishment of the Bildner Center, Rutgers hosted the AIS’s 1998 annual meeting and the three of us served as its program committee.

Since then, courses on Israeli history, society, and culture, as well as the study of Hebrew, have been an important aspect of the curriculum of the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers. The Bildner Center often hosts visiting scholars from Israel, it offers public programs and faculty seminars on topics related to Israel, and Israeli films are a major component of its annual Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.

Encountering senior colleagues who belong to the “founding generation,” along with young scholars who entered the field in June, prompted me to look back and appreciate how far we have come since those early days. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to take part in the development of the field of Israel studies and hope to see this trajectory continue for years to come.

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

## From the Chair



One of the special pleasures that my colleagues and I in the Department of Jewish Studies have enjoyed in recent years is working with student research assistants, thanks to the Aresty Research Assistant Program at Rutgers. Through this program, hundreds of undergraduate students can apply to work with members of the faculty on professors’ research projects.

The program benefits students and teachers alike. Undergraduates are given the opportunity to see up close, over an extended period of time, how scholars undertake research and to learn about the connections among professors’ research methods, resources, and goals. For their part, faculty not only receive assistance with their research but also have the opportunity to undertake their work in progress in conversation with student assistants, who can help professors develop insights into their projects.

Most of my colleagues in the Department of Jewish Studies have worked with Aresty Research Assistants since the program was instituted. When Professor Nancy Sinkoff began researching her intellectual biography of the historian Lucy Dawidowicz, she benefited greatly from the efforts of her research assistant, Nicole Kofman, a Business School major. Kofman’s tasks included finding and summarizing relevant scholarship and checking newspaper accounts to corroborate historical events.

Two years ago, I had the pleasure of working with Valerie Mayzelshteyn, a major in English and political science, as I conducted research on videotaped interviews with Holocaust survivors that are housed in the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive. In addition to compiling metadata on more than one hundred of these recordings, Mayzelshteyn watched and listened to dozens of interviews that we discussed together.

Last year, Jenna Kershenbaum, a major in Jewish studies and history, assisted Professor Gary Rendsburg with his research on texts of the Book of Samuel in the Cairo Geniza. Together, Kershenbaum and Rendsburg examined Samuel manuscripts from this famous cache of centuries-old documents, viewing some on the Geniza’s website and others that are housed in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

This year, Jonathan Manczur will be working with Professor Azzan Yadin-Israel on his forthcoming project, examining language contact as a basis for cultural contact. Manczur, who is majoring in philosophy and linguistics, will assist Yadin-Israel in collecting relevant secondary sources, providing summaries of their arguments, and developing the project’s bibliography.

For some of our undergraduates, being a research assistant is part of their larger interest in Jewish studies; for other students, it becomes an opportunity for an intellectual adventure that complements the focus of their studies at Rutgers. For the faculty, it is especially gratifying to watch these students tackle the challenges of conducting research and then discover the fruits of their efforts.

**—Jeffrey Shandler, Chair  
Department of Jewish Studies**



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## DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES

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### New Affiliated Faculty

The Department of Jewish Studies has invited three colleagues—Ethel Brooks, Rebecca Cypess, and Charles Häberl—to join its affiliated faculty. They enrich the department with their scholarship in other academic fields that contribute to the study of Jewish life.



**Ethel Brooks** is an associate professor in the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology. She has studied marginalized people throughout her career, as is evident in her book *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work*, published by

the University of Minnesota Press.

As one of the few Roma scholars in the world, Brooks has focused her recent scholarship on the Romani experience and is currently researching a book on violence against Roma worldwide. Brooks also advocates on behalf of the Roma. In 2013, she addressed the United Nations about increased anti-Roma discrimination in Europe.

More recently, she was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, where she contributes to scholarship on the genocide against Roma throughout Europe during World War II. Brooks has also spoken about this aspect of the Holocaust to New Jersey educators who participate in the Bildner Center's Master Teacher Institute.



**Rebecca Cypess**, an associate professor of music in the Mason Gross School of the Arts, holds degrees in musicology, Jewish studies, and harpsichord. Cypess specializes in the history, interpretation, and performance practices of music in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, as well as music

in Jewish culture and women in music. Her first book, *Curious and Modern Inventions: Instrumental Music as Discovery in Galileo's Italy*, was published by the University of Chicago Press.

A harpsichordist and fortepianist, Cypess is currently engaged in publication, performance, and recording projects related to the German Jewish patron and keyboardist Sara Levy (1761–1854) and her place in Enlightenment culture. In September 2014, Cypess collaborated with Professor Nancy Sinkoff to create *Sara Levy's World: Music, Gender, and Judaism in Enlightenment Berlin*, a multidisciplinary public symposium at Rutgers, and the two have an edited volume, *Sara Levy's World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin*, forthcoming in 2018 from the University of Rochester Press. Cypess is also currently working on another book, "Resounding Enlightenment: Sara Levy and the Music of Jewish Modernity." Her recording, *In Sara Levy's Salon* (Acis Productions, 2017), was completed with the aid of grants from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute.



**Charles Häberl** is an associate professor and chair of the Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures. He also teaches courses in the Middle Eastern Studies Program and served as the director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies from 2009 to 2012.

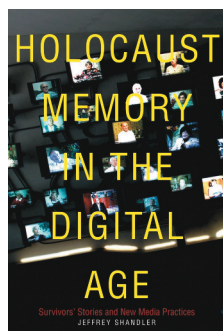
Häberl's primary academic focus is on the languages of the Middle East, both modern and ancient, as well as the ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities of the region. A major contributor to the scholarship on the world's endangered languages, he specializes in Aramaic and Mandaic. As one of the few scholars fluent in the latter language, he has written extensively on the small ethno-religious Mandaic-speaking minority in Iran.

With James McGrath, he coedited the forthcoming critical edition *The Mandaean Book of John*, with a translation and commentary, for the Berlin-based press De Gruyter. This is the first-ever English-language translation of the ancient manuscript. Last spring, the editors received a partial subsidy from the Rutgers Research Council to permit De Gruyter to make this same text openly available in digital format in addition to the print publication.

Häberl's command of Aramaic has also benefited students in the Department of Jewish Studies. He has worked independently with both graduate and undergraduate students who wish to read classical Jewish texts—including the Talmud, the Zohar, and the Targum—in their original languages.

## FACULTY BOOKS

### Jeffrey Shandler Authors New Book



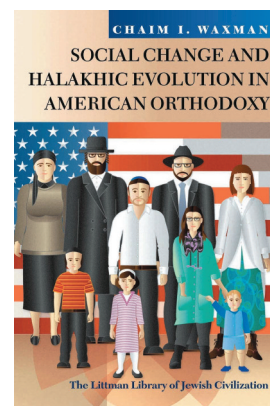
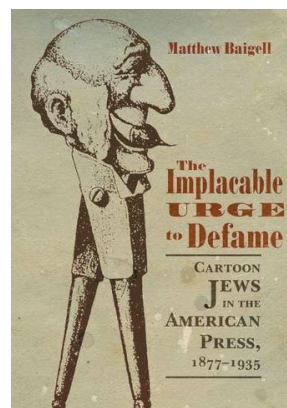
Professor **Jeffrey Shandler** has published a new book, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices* (Stanford University Press). The book explores the nexus of new media and memory practices, raising questions about how advances in digital technologies continue to influence the nature of Holocaust memorialization. Through an in-depth study of the largest and most widely available collection of videotaped interviews with survivors and other witnesses to the Holocaust,

the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, Shandler weighs the possibilities and challenges brought about by digital forms of public memory.

The Visual History Archive's holdings are extensive—more than 100,000 hours of video, including interviews with over 50,000 individuals—and came about at a time of heightened anxiety regarding the imminent passing of the generation of Holocaust survivors and other eyewitnesses. Now, the Shoah Foundation's investment in new digital

media is instrumental to its commitment to remember the Holocaust, both as a subject of historical importance in its own right and as a paradigmatic moral exhortation against intolerance. Shandler not only considers the archive as a whole, but also looks closely at individual survivors' stories, focusing on narrative, language, and spectacle to understand how Holocaust remembrance is mediated.

### 2017 Books by Professors Emeriti Matthew Baigell and Chaim I. Waxman



### Visiting Scholar Makes His Mark

A generous gift from **Allen and Joan Bildner** in 2007 endowed a visiting scholar position that allows the Center to bring young scholars to Rutgers to pursue their work, teach a course in Jewish studies, and participate in the Bildner Center's programs. In spring 2017, **Yakir Englander**, a specialist in modern Jewish philosophy and gender studies, joined us as the Bildner Visiting Scholar. Previously a Fulbright–Yitzhak Rabin Scholar and postdoctoral fellow at Northwestern University, and a visiting scholar at Harvard Divinity School, Englander taught an undergraduate course entitled “**Jews, Gender, and Sexuality**” in the Department of Jewish Studies.

His public talk “**Post-Holocaust Ultra-Orthodox Theology: A New Perspective**” drew on his current study of the varying responses to the

Holocaust among prominent rabbis and scholars as well as ultra-Orthodox women, a group that has been denied a voice in ultra-Orthodox theology. Englander pointed out that a diversity of voices had existed in the 1940s, yet were silenced by ultra-Orthodox leadership in the 1970s.

Englander's second public lecture, “**Religious Zionism, the Media, and the Changing Role of the Rabbi**,” focused on the digital age, revealing the challenges and limitations that online anonymity presents to rabbis who are inundated with questions of a sexual nature. Accordingly, issues that had been only minimally discussed in rabbinic writings over the centuries, such as those relating to homosexuality and masturbation, are now posted anonymously on websites about Jewish law, as are questions about the role of women and challenges to religious authority.

In addition to his public talks, Englander's faculty seminar, “**Interfaith Dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**,” drew colleagues from numerous academic disciplines and leaders from Jewish and Muslim communities on campus. His talk was based on theories about nonviolent social change as well as his experience in volunteer work as director of Kids4Peace in Israel and Palestine.

During his time at Rutgers, Englander completed work on an English translation of his second book, *The Male Body in Jewish Lithuanian Ultra-Orthodoxy*, published in Hebrew in May.





## BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

### Expanding Opportunities

The Rutgers Jewish Film Festival, our largest and most visible program, expanded to three new locations last year, increasing its geographic area and adding film screenings to accommodate audience demand. The opening night reception and weekend screenings in the award-winning Rutgers Business School building brought the festival onto campus in a meaningful way. Screenings in downtown Princeton gave our southern neighbors a taste of the festival. Thank you for supporting us as we launch the festival in these new towns and spaces.

A winter-film screening was another innovation in the festival programming. A new Israeli documentary on modern dance was a great fit with the Dance Department and the Rutgers Filmmaking Center at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, which cosponsored the event with the Bildner Center. The screening of *Mr. Gaga: A True Story of Love and Dance*, held at the Nicholas Music Center on the

Douglass Campus, welcomed more than 100 dance students.

On the College Avenue Campus, the Bildner Center expanded its space with the newly renovated Marion and Norman Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning in Miller Hall. The addition of a first-class facility provides us with a supportive teaching and learning environment for students and faculty. This modern building with state-of-the-art technology is the perfect environment for our educational seminars for teachers. The new learning center allowed us to fulfill repeated requests from teachers to offer an advanced seminar in Holocaust education to keep their knowledge current and relevant. Many teachers who had studied with us previously returned this past summer for an advanced two-day seminar.

We continue to look for new ways to reach the community and advance public education about the Jewish experience. Support from the community to continue the Center's programs is crucial to fulfilling our mission.

—Karen Small, Associate Director

### Leaving the Hasidic Community: A Personal Perspective

It was a baseball game that gave author **Shulem Deen** his first real taste of the outside world. Then he began visiting the public library. It all seemed harmless, unlikely to change anything. Yet it would ultimately lead him down a new path, far from his family and the insular lifestyle of his ultra-Orthodox community.

With warmth and authenticity, Deen shared his experiences with the nearly 400 guests, faculty, and students who turned out for his public talk on Wednesday evening, April 26, 2017, at the Douglass Student Center. The program about his memoir, *All Who Go Do Not Return*, was the Bildner Center's **Abram Matlofsky Memorial Program**, supported by the **Karma Foundation** in memory of **Sharon Karmazin's** father.

Sharon, who came to the talk with her daughter, **Dina Elkins**, and other family members, found Deen's memoir deeply compelling and was eager to have him speak at Rutgers. Many audience members had also read the book and were familiar with Deen's personal journey out of the Yiddish-speaking world of the Skverer Hasidim, which is entirely shut off from secular culture. This made for a

question-and-answer session that both Deen and other participants found especially meaningful.

Deen offered an honest, raw look at his experience, in particular the way he wrestled with faith, family, and community. The more he exposed himself to outside influences, the more he resented the "profound denial of choice" he felt within the Hasidic world. At some point, he realized, "I don't believe in what my community believes."

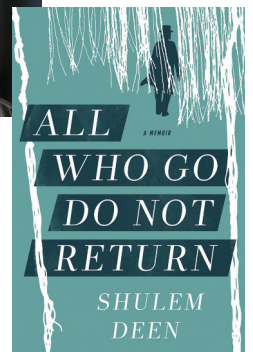
He wanted—and needed—to move beyond that narrow Jewish perspective. Yet he feared the consequences of revealing the truth about himself, knowing it would affect his family, including his siblings, whose marriage prospects might be harmed once his lack of faith became public. For as long as he could, he lied to his wife, children, and friends, keeping up appearances that he still believed in their stringent, ultra-Orthodox way of life.

After finally leaving the Skverer community, he had to create an entirely new life for himself, figure out how to make a living, and learn to navigate the unfamiliar secular world. He no longer conforms to a particular



style of Judaism, but instead connects with other Jews through their shared history and ritual. While he remains in contact with his mother and siblings, he is estranged from his children, the "very high price" he has paid for leaving his former life behind.

*All Who Go Do Not Return* won the National Jewish Book Award in 2015. Deen is a columnist for the *Forward* and has also written for the *New Republic*, *Salon*, and *Tablet*. He serves on the board of Footsteps, an organization that assists Jews seeking to assimilate into mainstream American culture after leaving their ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities.



## Uncovering American Jewish Life: 1766, 1866, and 1966

On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Rutgers University, the Bildner Center and the Department of Jewish Studies presented a public program, “Uncovering American Jewish Life,” in September, which invited the audience to reflect on the history of Rutgers in relation to American Jewish life over the past two and a half centuries. Held at the Douglass Student Center, this special panel discussion was the Center’s annual **Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Program**.

Professor **Jeffrey Shandler**, who organized and moderated the program, noted that these two histories have never been more closely interrelated than they are today: “Rutgers is now one of the most diverse campuses in the United States, with one of the largest Jewish student bodies of any university in the country. The establishment of the Bildner Center in 1996 and the Department of Jewish Studies in 2000 are milestones in the history of the university’s recent academic growth and its engagement with local communities.”

He added, “However, the close association between these two histories has not always been the case. In 1766, when Queens College, the name by which Rutgers was originally known, was founded in order to train young men for the ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church, it did not have any Jewish students or faculty. The first Jewish student to graduate from Rutgers, Samuel Judah, completed his degree in 1816.”

To consider the dynamics of American Jewish life over the past 250 years, Rutgers invited three scholars of American Jewry—**Laura Leibman**, of Reed College, **Annie Polland**, of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York, and **Tony Michels**, of the University of



Wisconsin–Madison—to reflect on this history by examining one revealing artifact each, from 1766, 1866, and 1966, respectively. Through this approach, the scholars modeled how they use primary sources as points of entry to understanding the past.

Leibman presented a letter written by a Jewish woman living in New Brunswick during the colonial period. She contextualized the letter to describe the economic and social challenges that many Jews, especially women, faced in eighteenth-century America. Polland examined a mid-nineteenth-century Jewish charity roll, which was emblematic of how American Jewish philanthropic practices were then changing in response to the arrival of growing numbers of immigrants settling in rapidly expanding urban neighborhoods. To exemplify the dynamics of American Jewish culture in the turbulent mid-1960s, Michels probed the history of the landmark first album recorded by the Velvet Underground in 1966. Michels argued that the biography of Lou Reed, the band’s leader, reveals a wider story of Jews and the cultural avant-garde in twentieth-century America.



TENEMENT PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM  
PHOTO AT TOP RIGHT: MRS. AARON LOPEZ AND HER SON, JOSHUA / GILBERT STUART (1755–1828) / DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

1766-2016  
**RUTGERS**  
250

## A Day of Revolutionary Thinking at Rutgers

On November 10, 2016, the Rutgers 250th Anniversary celebration culminated with a universitywide showcase of alumni expertise and knowledge. Accomplished graduates—honored as Rutgers 250 Fellows—returned to campus to present new ideas, discoveries, and practices that are shaping the world. **Jeffrey Shandler** organized, with the **Department of Art History**, a program entitled “**Curating in the Twenty-First Century: On Jewish and Nazi-Looted Art**.” The program was cosponsored by the **Bildner Center** and the **Department of Jewish Studies**.

■ **Victoria Reed**, Monica S. Sadler Curator of Provenance, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Ph.D., Rutgers University, 2002), presented “**Research on Nazi-Era Looting and Restitution at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**.”

■ **Norman Kleeblatt**, Susan and Elihu Rose Chief Curator of the Jewish Museum, New York (B.A., Rutgers College, 1971), presented “**Disobedient Images: Confronting Art, Questioning Meaning**.”



## The Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center

### Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education

#### Holocaust Memory Workshop

The educators who turned out for the March 3 workshop—**“Holocaust Memory: The Meaning of Objects”**—represented a diversity in geography, teaching subjects, and school districts. Several in the group had been networking at Bildner Center courses for years. Others, such as **Patrick Brady**, district supervisor of social studies for the North Bergen School District, were new to the program. “North Bergen is a diverse district with a small Jewish population, so our students don’t hear the stories passed down from generations,” said Brady, who brought five teachers with him. “We’re excited to find new ways to make the Holocaust more relatable to our students.”

Teachers learn to navigate primary documents, testimonies, and other Holocaust-related material in digital archives at the Master Teacher Institute.

**Daniel Hernandez**, a history teacher from North Bergen, said he was impressed with the program’s scholarship and range of material. He plans to share a moving poem with his class about shoes left behind by children who died in the concentration camps.

The morning speakers included **Suzy Snyder**, a curator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and **Jeffrey Shandler**, Rutgers professor and chair, Department of Jewish Studies, who discussed Holocaust relics and survivors’ stories. A hands-on afternoon session in the computer lab followed, where **Colleen Tambuscio**, the program’s pedagogical adviser, instructed the teachers on how to implement the use of objects and artifacts in the classroom.

Troves of primary source material, such as diaries, photographs, and audiovisual testimony of survivors, are now housed in digital archives, said Tambuscio. She described how her classroom Skyped with **Peter Feigl**, a Holocaust survivor in his eighties who had been hidden in France as a child, after reading his childhood diary and viewing his testimony online.

“Object-centered learning sets the stage for inquiry, and the students were able to ask a lot of great questions,” Tambuscio said. “He’s still connecting with us, still trying to make sense of his experience. For him, the story is always evolving.”

—Adapted from *“Teaching the Holocaust,”* by Carla Cantor, Rutgers Today (03/27/17).



Teachers in the MTI’s summer courses

#### Summer Courses for Educators

As the summer heated up, so did programs in the **Master Teacher Institute (MTI) in Holocaust Education**.

More than thirty-five New Jersey middle and high school teachers, from a broad range of school districts and disciplines, headed to the Rutgers–New Brunswick Campus in June to participate in courses on Holocaust history and education.

Held in the new Marion and Norman Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning, a state-of-the-art facility in Miller Hall, these free courses gave participants the necessary tools and resources to approach teaching this complex subject matter, as well as a network of peers with whom they can continue to develop their skills. **Colleen Tambuscio**, an educator who has been involved in Holocaust and genocide education for more than twenty years, serves as the pedagogical adviser to the program.

Financial support for the Holocaust education programs is provided by the **Marjorie and Egon Berg Holocaust Education Fund** and the **Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences**.

#### History of the Holocaust

The popular weeklong course **“History of the Holocaust,”** now in its sixth year, continues to offer teachers with little or no prior experience in Holocaust education a comprehensive, chronological history, including the origins and emergence of Nazism, the fate of victim groups, the legacy of anti-Semitism in Germany, and American policy on immigration in the 1930s and 1940s. It also addresses the challenges and complexities of using testimonies, films, and other resources to teach about the Holocaust and genocide. The course was taught this year by Dr. **Joanna Sliwa**, a historian of the Holocaust and modern Jewish history.



**Victoria Kessler-Sher**, Somerville High School (left), with **Karen Small** and **Perri Geller-Clark**, Moorestown High School

➤ See **MTI** on page 11

# 2016 Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

Now approaching its eighteenth season, the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival** continues to offer local audiences the chance to view entertaining, cutting-edge Jewish films in theaters close to home, while at the same time advancing the Bildner Center's important community-building mission. The festival proves its impact as a cultural institution year after year, screening many New Jersey and U.S. premieres and drawing an audience of students, faculty, and a diverse cross section of filmgoers from across the region. The university's scholarly resources uniquely enhance the festival, which provides a public forum for thoughtful conversation about multiple facets of Jewish life and the global Jewish experience.

The film festival expanded to multiple venues this year: the **AMC Loews New Brunswick**, the **Rutgers Business School** in Piscataway, and the **Princeton Garden Theatre**. This enabled the Bildner Center to reach new audiences both on and off the Rutgers campus and extended the duration of the festival, giving filmgoers more opportunities to see each of the films.

## Festival Highlights

November 10, 2016, marked Rutgers' 250th anniversary. The celebration carried over from the campus to the AMC theater with the distribution of red and white candy and RU250 pins as well as special recognition of Rutgers students, alumni, faculty, and staff in the audience. The Bildner Center is proud to be a part of the university's history as well as its future.

Among the most popular festival films, Natalie Portman's directorial debut, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, based on Amos Oz's best-selling memoir, sold out almost immediately, as did *Denial*. An absorbing account of one woman's fight for the truth, *Denial* portrays Emory University professor Deborah Lipstadt's historic legal trial against Holocaust denial. Dr. **Dan Leshem**, now director of the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center at Queensborough Community College, CUNY, was a graduate student studying with Lipstadt. He shared his insider's perspective on the portrayal of the trial, offering details

Scene from  
*The Women's  
Balcony*



**Asaph Polonsky, Karen Small, Executive Dean Peter March, Karma Foundation President Sharon Karmazin, and Chancellor Richard Edwards at the opening night reception**

from the Holocaust Denial on Trial website he maintained at that time.

Several other filmmakers and notable speakers addressed festival audiences, sharing meaningful insights into the topics touched upon in this past year's films. Among them was writer-director **Asaph Polonsky**, who came to the opening night screening of his film *One Week and a Day*, a humorous Israeli feature about love and loss, in which a grieving father sets out on a journey of self-discovery. Executive producer **Tal Recanat** attended a screening of *Germans & Jews*, a documentary that examines the fraught and fragile relationships between Jews and non-Jews in postwar Germany. Other filmmakers who came to the screenings of their films include writer-director **Dani Menkin** and executive producer **Nancy Spielberg** (*On the Map*), writer-director **Roger Sherman** (*In Search of Israeli Cuisine*), and co-writer-director **Tomer Heyman** (*Who's Gonna Love Me Now?*).

In addition, **Marcia Haddad Ikonopoulos**, museum director of the Lower East Side's Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, spoke about the Jews of Greece following the screening of *Cloudy Sunday*. The first Greek film ever screened at the festival, it drew a new audience of filmgoers of Greek descent. **Elisabeth Sussman**, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art who co-curated an Eva Hesse sculpture exhibition at the Jewish Museum, offered her unique perspective on the artist and her oeuvre following *Eva Hesse*, a documentary about the artist's brief yet extraordinary life. The film attracted members of the art community who were new to the festival.

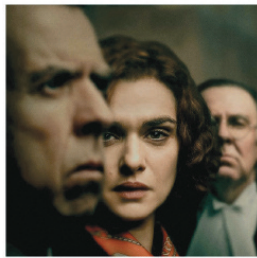
The festival closed with a special presentation of the lighthearted Israeli film *The Women's Balcony*, one of its very first U.S. screenings.

➤ See **FILM FESTIVAL** on page 9

*The Rutgers Jewish Film Festival is made possible thanks to the generosity of the Karma Foundation and a devoted cadre of festival Patrons.*



## 2016 Audience Choice Awards



► **FILM FESTIVAL** from page 8

## Free Holocaust Film Screening for Students

Approximately 350 middle and high school students from across New Jersey attended a free screening of *Fanny's Journey*, as part of the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival. The film tells the remarkable tale of hidden children from France who survive the Holocaust. After the film, special guest **Maud Dahme**, who survived the war as a hidden child in the Netherlands, shared her own experiences and fielded questions from the student audience.

This special opportunity was sponsored in partnership with the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center** at the Bildner Center as a way of supporting and supplementing classroom learning about the Holocaust.

Participating students hailed from Neptune High School; the Marion P. Thomas Charter School in Newark; Wall High School; BelovED Community Charter School, Jersey City; Freehold Township High School; Abraham Clark High School, Roselle; Paterson Eastside High School; and Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield.

## Scripture and Tradition: The Challenge of Modernity

**B**enjamin D. Sommer, professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, delivered an engaging and original lecture, “**Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: The Challenge of Modernity**,” to students, faculty, and community members at the College Avenue Student Center on December 5. The public talk was supported by the **Sagner Family Foundation**.

The presentation was based on his recent book, *Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition* (2015), which stands at the intersection of biblical theology and modern Jewish thought. Sommer led the audience through a variety of biblical and rabbinic texts, which collectively demonstrate that the text of the Torah is intended not only to convey God’s will, but also to allow for the inclusion of the people of Israel’s interpretation of, and response to, that divine will.

Sommer explained that the Torah provides for a two-way street, with both the revealed word of God and human agency playing equal roles. In other words, the Torah is not a static text, revealed to the people of Israel more than 3,000 years ago, but rather from the start a dynamic text, inviting its readers to engage with it, interpret it, respond to it, and even contribute to it.

Sommer then connected this understanding of the Torah to the theological writings of modern Jewish philosophers such as Franz Rosenzweig and Abraham Joshua Heschel, who also saw the human and the divine in a dialogical relationship.

In sum, the evening bridged the ancient and the modern, the textual and the philosophical, and the traditional and the nontraditional—all of which left the audience much to ponder.

## ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

**The Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program,**  
funded by Leon and Toby Cooperman  
**John Demjanjuk and the Last Great Holocaust Trial**  
Lawrence Douglas, Amherst College

**The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Program**  
**Golda Meir: A Biographical Sketch**  
Pnina Lahav, Boston University

### Mr. Gaga: A True Story of Love and Dance

Winter Screening of the  
**Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**  
Cosponsored by the  
Dance Department and  
Rutgers Filmmaking Center,  
Mason Gross School of the Arts



**The Ruth Ellen Steinman and Edward J. Bloustein Memorial Lecture**  
**Environmental Peacemaking in Israel**  
Shahar Sadeh, Columbia University  
Cosponsored by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

## We are grateful for the generosity of our donors

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life is a vital component of Rutgers University, yet most of its programs are made possible through endowed gifts and private funding. The Bildner Center's cultural, educational, and scholarly programs are open to the public at little or no cost. Given the budgetary constraints of a state university, we face the increasing need to guarantee the ongoing development of the Center and the Department of Jewish Studies for future generations. Endowment gifts and bequests are important ways to ensure that we can maintain the academic integrity and high quality of our courses, educational programs, and communal outreach.

### We thank the following for their support:

#### Bequests

The Bildner Center is proud to be the beneficiary of two bequests this year, in which individuals made a commitment for a gift from their estate upon their passing. The lasting impact of bequests helps to secure the Center's future.

- **Estate of Mrs. Helen Eisenberg**
- **Estate of Mrs. Frances R. Kaplan** SB'41

Gifts to Rutgers University can be directed to the Bildner Center.

For more information, contact **Allison Klein** at 848-932-6455, or visit our website, <http://BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu/donate>.

#### Leadership: \$25,000 and up

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

#### Builders: \$10,000–\$24,999

- **Andrew J. Melnick** RC'63, RBS'70, for his ongoing support of **Israel studies** at Rutgers.
- **The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation** for its support of the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- **The Steinberg Family Fund** for its gift to the Bildner Center.

#### Pacesetters: \$5,000–\$9,999

- **Christine and Steven B. Boehm**, Esq. RC'75 for their contribution to the **Holocaust Education Support Fund**.
- **Shelley and Steven Einhorn** RC'70 for sponsoring a film in the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- **Arthur and Betty Roswell** for sponsoring a film in the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- **The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation** for its continued support of the **Department of Jewish Studies Curriculum Enhancement Fund** and the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.

#### Supporters: \$1,000–\$4,999

Barry and Deborah Adler  
Dr. Adele Meyer Brodtkin  
David M. Greene  
Donna and Steven Weiss

### Sarah Portilla Named Program Coordinator at Bildner Center

Sarah Portilla, a graduate of Rutgers College with a double major in Jewish studies and political science, is the new program coordinator at the Bildner Center. After earning a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice, Sarah worked at Rutgers Hillel for almost seven years and then the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey for three and a half years. She is thrilled to return to Rutgers, where she can bring her experience in community engagement and fundraising to her new position. Her responsibilities include coordinating the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival and the Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education, as well as working with community and donor relations.





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## IN MEMORIAM

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**B**arbara Kagan Littman was a great friend and supporter of the Bildner Center. She and her husband, Leonard, along with Len's brother Herb and Herb's wife Linda, endowed the Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center, which provides training for teachers. In addition, Barbara combined her

love of design and her Jewish heritage to work with the Bildner Center to bring the world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to Rutgers for the opening of the Bildner Center's series "Art in the Public Space." An accomplished interior designer, she earned a master's degree in architecture from the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), and she later taught classes in the Departments of Architecture at NJIT and Kean University. In recent years, she served as a docent at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. Throughout her life, Barbara was a philanthropist devoted to numerous charities. She was a longtime supporter of the Jewish Federation of Middlesex County, and she also served on the boards of the Betty Ford Clinic in Palm Springs, Alyn Pediatric Hospital in Jerusalem, the Ronald McDonald House in New Brunswick and Long Branch, and ASAP in New Brunswick.



**D**r. Norman Reitman was instrumental in the founding of the Bildner Center and served on its leadership committee for many years. Notably, Norman and his wife, Syril, established a fund at the Bildner Center to bring visiting scholars in Jewish studies to Rutgers. Norman opened his first medical practice in 1938 in his New

Brunswick apartment, becoming the youngest certified internist in central New Jersey. He went on to serve as chief of staff at Middlesex General University Hospital (now Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital), chair the hospital's Department of Medicine, and become chief of cardiology. He was a professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and chair of the Board of Governors of the American College of Cardiology. A Rutgers alumnus, he was a member of the Rutgers University Foundation Board of Overseers and Board of Trustees, and chair of the university's Board of Governors. For his long and distinguished record of service to the public and to Rutgers, the university awarded him the Rutgers Medal and the Rutgers Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award. Later, he was named a life member of the President's Council and also earned a presidential citation for his service to Rutgers. Dr. Reitman was 105 years old.

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► **MTI** from page 7

### Advanced Seminar in Holocaust Education

New this year was a two-day advanced seminar in Holocaust education designed for teachers who have completed the "History of the Holocaust" summer course at Rutgers. In fact, seventeen alumni of the introductory course returned to Rutgers this summer to focus more intensively on Holocaust, genocide, and human rights education. Dr. **Alexis Herr**, a Saul Kagan Fellow in Advanced Shoah Studies, presented two talks: "**Believe, Obey, Fight: Fascism and the Holocaust in Italy**" and "**The Evolving Shape of Human Rights**." Colleen Tambuscio served as moderator, and the first day culminated with a session on challenges in teaching this subject matter. Three teachers presented during this workshop, focusing on the selection of materials, help for students in identifying with the victims, and the difficulties in deciding what to teach with limited classroom time devoted to this topic.

The following day's focus was "**Refugees, Immigrants, and America**." Judith Gerson, professor of Jewish studies, sociology, and women's and gender studies at Rutgers, spoke

about the important information gleaned from reading memoirs by German Jewish refugees who settled in America. Gerson will serve as the Ina Levine Invitational Scholar at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., during the 2017–2018 academic year. She will start archival and ethnographic research for a project entitled "The Future of Holocaust Memory."

Dr. **Rebecca Erbelding**, a historian of American responses to the Holocaust and an archivist and curator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, delivered two talks. The first talk was drawn from research for Erbelding's forthcoming book, *Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe*, to be published by Doubleday in 2018. It focused on the War Refugee Board set up in 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The second offered a preview of the museum's forthcoming exhibit on America and the Holocaust and the process the museum goes through to select and display information and artifacts to participants of both the advanced and introductory courses.

## Year-End Celebration

On Tuesday, May 2, the new Marion and Norman Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning was abuzz with end-of-school-year festivities. Faculty, students, family, and friends came together to honor accomplishments in the field of Jewish studies and also to pay tribute to beloved Hebrew-language coordinator and instructor **Orly Moshenberg**, who retired at the end of the term after twenty-seven years at Rutgers.

Among the students who were honored was **Jenna Kershenbaum**, who received a research award that enabled her to participate in an archaeological dig in Israel this summer. Guests enjoyed perusing research on display by Kershenbaum, the Aresty Research Assistant to

Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**, for their joint project, "The Book of Samuel in the Cairo Geniza." In addition, **Gabriel DeRego**, a student at Mason Gross School of the Arts, will participate in DanceJerusalem at Hebrew University in the fall, thanks to an award designated for study in Israel.

Tributes to Moshenberg were a special highlight of the event. Professor **Yael Zerubavel** spoke about Moshenberg's instrumental role as coordinator of the Hebrew Language Program, which she took on in 2000, beginning with a revamping of the Hebrew curriculum to develop courses that would create a bridge between Hebrew language and literature. In an effort to bring Israeli literature, art, and culture to life for her students, she worked with the Bildner Center staff to encourage drawing prominent Israeli writers, film directors, and other cultural figures to campus. According to Zerubavel, "Orly has been a tireless advocate of the study of Hebrew language and culture as the program coordinator, and excelled in her roles as a dynamic teacher, a caring mentor, and a devoted colleague."

**Talia Schabes**, who hopes to enroll one day in medical school in Israel, presented an analysis of the famous Israeli folk song "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" as part of the tribute to Moshenberg. Afterward, **Micah Lebowitz**, who thanked Moshenberg for greatly enhancing his understanding of Hebrew texts and Israeli culture, was joined by **Esti Mellul** in a moving rendition of the song.

Alumna **Neshama Marcus '05** credits Moshenberg with helping her to recognize and appreciate the complexities of the Hebrew language and Hebrew texts in a way that she never had before. She added, "When she asked us to write weekly journals in Hebrew, I took advantage. I wrote about my challenges, concerns, and fears, and she met me with kindness. She not only corrected my broken Hebrew, she wrote thought-provoking questions, comments, and tips."

Sophomore **Benjamin Bass**, whose decision to become a Hebrew minor was greatly influenced by Moshenberg, spoke about her passion, commitment, and skill as a teacher, but also about her deep concern for helping her students achieve success and happiness. According to Bass, her love of her profession made her a great role model to emulate both inside and outside the classroom: "It's hard to say if it was intentional, or simply a function of the incredible person she is, but she succeeded in demonstrating how to live a meaningful, passionate life."



Orly Moshenberg (in the back, fifth from left) surrounded by her students



Jewish studies faculty at the celebration

### Student Award Recipients, 2017

#### Jenna Kershenbaum '18

Double Major: Jewish Studies and History  
**Deborah S. & Herbert B. Wasserman Research Award**

#### Micah Lebowitz '18

Major: Communications;  
Double Minor: Hebrew Language and Business Entrepreneurship  
**Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award**

#### Elisheva Rosen '17

Double Major: History and Classics;  
Double Minor: Jewish Studies and English  
**Maurice Meyer III and Irma Meyer Award**

#### Melanie Samad '17

Double Major: Anthropology and Religion;  
Minor: Jewish Studies  
**Harold and Betty Perl Award**

#### Talia Schabes '19

Major: Nutritional Sciences;  
Minor: Jewish Studies  
**Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and Lillian Glasser Award**

**AWARD FOR STUDY IN ISRAEL**  
Supported by **Herbert and Jacqueline Klein**

#### Gabriel DeRego '18

Major: Dance, Mason Gross School of the Arts  
**Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

## Student Looks to Law School and Public Service

When **Elisheva Rosen** decided to attend Rutgers, the choice was both academic and practical. Rutgers offered the breadth of opportunities she sought, including the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) Honors Program and a wide range of disciplines. By studying at an in-state university, she also knew she could advance to law school without undergraduate debt, a freedom she wanted as she pursued a career in public service.

Initially, Elisheva planned to major in history and minor in English. But her background in Latin inspired her to take multiple classical humanities courses—so many, in fact, that she declared a second major in classics.

Her intellectual curiosity would also lead her to take Jewish studies classes. She wondered, “Why are people studying themselves?” when she signed up for “American Jewish History” with Professor **Nancy Sinkoff**. Exposure to the scholarly perspective on Jewish history and culture, which she had previously studied through a religious lens, intrigued her. She went on to take enough courses to complete a second minor and received the **Maurice Meyer III and Irma Meyer Award** in Jewish studies when she graduated this past May.

In spring 2016, Elisheva participated in Professor Sinkoff’s “**A Tale of Two Uprisings: Poles, Jews, and Polish-Jews under Nazi Occupation and Soviet Domination**,” an eight-day global field experience in Poland offered by the Honors College, the SAS Honors Program, and Study Abroad under the auspices of the university’s Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs (GAIA Centers). Assistance from the **Barry and Deborah Venezia Adler International Study Scholarship** made it possible for her to join this program.

“As an observant Jewish student among a diverse group of Rutgers undergraduates, Elisheva added



important perspective,” Sinkoff recalls. “Thoughtful and articulate, she engaged both her Rutgers peers and University of Warsaw students in dialogue about the complexities of being an American Jew touring contemporary Poland.”

Values of social justice and voluntarism were part of the fabric of family life in Elisheva’s Teaneck home while growing up. “I was taught that helping others, changing society for the best, and *tikkun olam* are what you do,” she recalls. She exemplified that commitment during her time at Rutgers.

While serving on the SAS Honors Program Student Advisory Board, she sensitized program leadership to the unique needs of Jewish students. She also helped revitalize Rutgers READ, the university book club.

Elisheva was active in both Chabad and Hillel during her years on campus, and she participated in the Chabad-Hillel Respite Care Program at Children’s Specialized Hospital, an affiliate member of RWJBarnabas Health. After traveling to Thailand with Justifi, which organizes socially conscious travel programs within a Jewish pluralistic framework, Elisheva connected Rutgers Hillel with the organization. She took part in the alternative spring break trip to Nicaragua that resulted from that connection, during which Rutgers

students worked on an environmental sustainability program in a school near León.

Elisheva also interned for six months with the New Jersey Division of Law’s Department of Children and Families. She later spent a summer working closely with a judge at the Bergen County Courthouse. Both experiences gave her the chance to “witness concrete change taking place to protect and aid families,” she says.

She is now enrolled in the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, the first step toward her career in public service. After graduation, she plans to start as a court clerk before advancing to prosecutor and then deputy attorney general, with aspirations ultimately to become a judge. As she explains, “This will position me to make a difference and help give children and families their best chance.”

### Jewish Studies Graduates 2016–2017

Alyssa Bree  
Danielle A. Ciciyasvili  
Hanna Culang  
Rachel A. Edelman  
Leila P. Gordon  
Taylor P. Grodzinsky  
Alex M. Hamilton  
Aaron E. Jaslove  
Joseph G. Kotzker  
Sara Y. Markowitz  
Noa Y. Rabin  
Elisheva L. Rosen  
Melanie Samad  
Ariel D. Slonim

### Master’s Degree

Feigue Cieplinski  
Charles Loder  
Pnina Zunger



## FACULTY UPDATES

**Rebecca Cypess**, a new affiliated faculty member in Jewish studies, received grants from the Music & Letters Trust and the Rutgers Research Council for a lecture-recital, entitled “Songs of the Jewish Enlightenment,” which she presented with Professor Nancy Sinkoff at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory, Vancouver, British Columbia. She also received a grant to complete an audio recording, *In Sara Levy’s Salon*. (See article on page 3.)

**Leslie Fishbein** presented a paper, “Commodifying Prostitution: New Orleans Invents New Modes of Circulation,” in a session that she organized, “New Orleans: Portal to Commodified Circulation of Prostitution,” at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, New Orleans. She also led a workshop, “The Culture of the Sixties,” for the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis Institute for High School Teachers.

**Judith Gerson** presented two conference papers: “Narratives of Displacement and Loss: An Abductive Rereading of Holocaust Memoirs,” American Sociological Association, Seattle; and “Thinking about Patterns of Coherence and Difference: German Jewish Refugee Survivor Accounts of Being Jewish,” Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego. She also gave several talks regionally, including “Diaspora Identities” at Neve Shalom, Metuchen. From September 1, 2017, through May 31, 2018, she will be the Ina Levine Invitational Scholar at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. (See MTI article on page 11.)

**Charles Häberl** published an article, “The Origin and Meaning of Mandaic Eutra,” in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* (University of Manchester) and a chapter, “The Aramaic Incantation Texts as Witnesses to the Mandaic Scriptures,” in *Scribal Practices and the Social Construction of Knowledge in Antiquity, Late Antiquity and Medieval Islam*, ed. Myriam Wissa (Louvain: Peeters). With Maryam Borjian, he coedited “Middle Eastern Languages in Diasporic USA Communities,” a special issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, and they coauthored the introduction, “At the Intersection of Language and Social Variables: The Case of Middle Eastern Languages in the United States.” Häberl also served as an Anna-Maria Kellen Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, for which he received a competitive fellowship leave from Rutgers. In Berlin, he delivered the Anna-Maria Kellen Lecture, “From Jerusalem to the Karûn: What can Mandaean Geographies Tell Us?” He also participated in the 227th annual meeting of the American Oriental Society, in Los Angeles, delivering a lecture, “A Four-Column Glossary from Ottoman Basra.” In addition, he gave a lecture, “Neo-Mandaic: The View from

Iraq,” at the “International Conference on Neo-Aramaic Dialectology: Jews, Christians and Mandaeans,” Warsaw. He delivered the following invited lectures: “The Mandaeans before Islam,” Freie Universität Berlin; “Neo-Mandaic: The View from Iraq,” Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg; and “‘Flight from Persecution’ in Mandaean Literature,” New York University Abu Dhabi. (See also article on page 3.)

**Michael G. Levine** gave the following talks: “After the Animal: Kafka, Monstrosity, and the Graphic Novel,” University of Chicago; “Atomic Fission: Celan’s ‘A Syllable Pain,’” Fifth Biennial German Jewish Studies Workshop, University of Notre Dame; “Out-takes of a Life: Benjamin’s ‘Storyteller’ and the Cinematographic Unconscious,” “Visualités, textualités: Regards croisés sur la *Medientheorie*” conference, EHESS (l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales), Paris; and “Outtakes of Life: Benjamin’s ‘The Storyteller,’” “Conference on Narration and Space,” University of Lausanne.

**Gary A. Rendsburg** coedited *Le-ma’an Ziony: Essays in Honor of Ziony Zevit*, published by Wipf & Stock, and published two articles: “How Could a Torah Scroll Have Included the Word *Za’atute*?” and “Shemen turaq (Song 1:3).” He spoke at, and otherwise participated in, conferences at the Academy of the Hebrew Language (Jerusalem), the University of Southern California (Los Angeles), the Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia), and Renaissance Weekend (Charleston). He led an all-day program at the Smithsonian Institution entitled “The Dead Sea Scrolls: What 70 Years Have Told Us.” He was honored to present the Sixth Annual Henri Hyvernât Lecture at the Catholic University of America, entitled “Scroll Down: Classical Jewish Texts, from Parchment to Internet,” in addition to teaching three graduate seminars in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures.

**Jeffrey Shandler** published a new book, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors’ Stories and New Media Practices* (Stanford University Press). (See article on page 4.) He gave the following talks: “Photography and Holocaust Memory,” Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York; “Living Room Witnesses: American Television and the Holocaust,” Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; “‘And Now I Have to Read in Jewish Something’: Yiddish Performances by Holocaust Survivors,” Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and “Queer Yiddishkeit: Practice and Theory” and “The Holocaust for Beginners: Yankev Glatshteyn’s *Emil un Karl* and Other Wartime Writing for Young Readers,” Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, University of Chicago. He published the following essays: “Yiddish Shylocks in Theater and Literature” (with Nina Warnke), in *Wrestling with Shylock: Jewish Responses to ‘The Merchant of Venice,’* ed.

Edna Nahshon and Michael Shapiro (Cambridge University Press); “‘If Jewish People Wrote All the Songs’: The Anti-Folklore of Allan Sherman,” *The Jewish Role in American Life: An Annual Review* (Casden Institute for the Study of the American Role in Jewish Life, University of Southern California / Purdue University Press); “Reaktion auf Jules Kirschenbaums, ‘The Golem,’ 1999,” in *Golem*, ed. Emily D. Bilski and Martina Lüdicke (Jüdisches Museum Berlin / Kerber Verlag); “The Unsightly and the Unseen: Yishay Garbasz at Home at the Border,” *Rejoinder*; and “The Jewish Museum Effect,” *Peoplehood Papers*. Shandler also planned two events commemorating the 250th anniversary of Rutgers: He organized and moderated a panel of scholars, “Uncovering American Jewish Life: 1766, 1866, and 1966,” for the Bildner Center. In addition, he organized, with the Department of Art History, a program for “A Day of Revolutionary Thinking” entitled “Curating in the Twenty-First Century: On Jewish and Nazi-Looted Art.” (See article on page 6.)

**Nancy Sinkoff** spent the year as the Elizabeth and J. Richardson Dilworth Fellow in Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Her book *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History* is under contract (Wayne State University Press), as is her edited volume (with Rebecca Cypess), *Sara Levy’s World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin* (in the Eastman Studies in Music Series, University of Rochester Press); *In Sara Levy’s Salon*, a CD related to the latter book, is available now. She gave a talk, “Musical Enlightenment: The Historical and Social Context of the Itzig Circle in Late Eighteenth-Century Berlin,” as part of a lecture-recital, entitled “Songs of the Jewish Enlightenment,” presented with Professor Rebecca Cypess at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory, Vancouver, British Columbia. She was a discussant on the panel “Remembering Ezra Mendelsohn: Historian of East European Jewry,” at the 48th annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, San Diego, where she also chaired a panel, “The Afterlife of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.” She continued her teaching fellowship for the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, giving talks in partnerships with synagogues and Jewish Community Centers in Hoboken, Livingston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. She was one of the leaders of a trip to Poland, “The History and Revival of Jewish Life and Culture in Warsaw and Kraków,” with Congregation Ansche Chesed, New York, before continuing on to Lviv, Ukraine, to deliver a lecture, “Enlightenment Migrations: Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, Paris, Podolia (Ukraine), and Providence” (with Rachael Rosner, Ph.D.), at the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe and at the Ukrainian Institute of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Sinkoff received the USC Shoah Foundation 2017–2018

International Teaching Fellowship, which she will use to incorporate testimonies into her course “Exile under Nazism and Communism” in the spring of 2018. Sinkoff resumes her role as the director of the Center for European Studies at Rutgers for the 2017–2018 academic year.

**Paola Tartakoff** was a fellow at both the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem and the European Institutes for Advanced Study. In Israel, she completed a draft of her second book project, “Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe.” In addition, she gave the following talks: “Both the Men and the Women: Toward a Fuller History of Medieval Jewish-Christian Conversion,” Israel Institute for Advanced Studies; “Beyond Conversion and Ritual Murder: The Norwich Circumcision Case of 1230, Recontextualized,” at “Forum Ashkenaz,” Hebrew University of Jerusalem; “Converts, Apostates, and Returnees: Toward a More Inclusive Framework for the Study of Jewish-Christian Conversion,” at the conference “The Middle Ages—Now!,” University of Haifa; “Conversion and Competing Identities in Medieval Europe: The Case of a Contested Child,” at the international workshop “Contextualizing the Self: Creating and Recreating the First Person,” Tel Aviv University; and “Jews as Agents of Conversion in Medieval Christendom: Between Calumny and Misperception,” at the conference “Agents of Conversion,” Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She chaired sessions at the conferences “*Sefer Hasidim* in Context” (Hebrew University) and “Jewish Women’s Cultural Capital under Islam” (Israel Institute for Advanced Studies). Her essay “Conversion and Return to Judaism in High and Late Medieval Europe: Christian Perceptions and Portrayals” was published in *Contesting Inter-Religious Conversion in the Medieval World* (Routledge); and “Segregatory Legislation and Jewish Religious Influence on Christians in the Thirteenth Century” was published in *Medieval Minorities: Law and Multiconfessional Societies in the Middle Ages* (Brepols).

**Azzan Yadin-Israel** gave the following invited talks: “Textual Interpretation and Received Tradition,” at the Australian Catholic University’s Rome Center; and “Contact-Induced Cultural Change,” at Brandeis University. In addition, he presented a paper, “Sacrifice and Divine Personhood,” at the annual Society of Biblical Literature conference. He continued to work on a book-length study of where and why the Forbidden Fruit came to be identified with the apple, as well as the second volume of his *Intuitive Vocabulary* series, this one exploring the cognates between English and Spanish.

**Yael Zerubavel** received a fellowship from the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, during fall 2016 and was a member of its research group “Israeli Histories, Societies, and Cultures: Comparative Approaches.” She published “Response to Ian Lustick’s ‘The Holocaust in Israeli Political Culture:

Four Constructions and Their Consequences,’” in *Contemporary Jewry*; and “The Seed, the Symbol, and the Zionist Renewal Paradigm,” in the *Frankel Institute Annual*. She delivered an invited lecture, “The ‘Return to the Bible’ and the Performance of the Past in Israeli Culture,” Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, University of Michigan. She presented the following papers: “The Performance of Origins in Modern Hebrew Culture” at the interdisciplinary conference “Revisiting the Question of Jewish Origins: Myth/Construct/Reality,” Brown University; and “Contested Visions of the Desert, Nature, and the Bedouins in the Contemporary Tourist Discourse,” at the annual conference of the Association for Israel Studies (AIS), Brandeis University. At the AIS conference, she was also a discussant on a panel, “Imagining Palestine: Zionists’ Political Imagination, 1917–1947.” She delivered a lecture, “The Desert, the Island, and the Wall: Symbolic Landscapes and Space Metaphors in Israeli Culture,” for the Aesthetics of Shared Space Working Group at the Rutgers Center for Cultural Analysis. She served on the International Advisory Board for the Stanley Lewis Chair in Israel Studies at the University of Oxford, and on the Young Scholar Award Committee of the Association for Israel Studies and the Israel Institute. She joined the editorial board of *Public Sphere* [*HaMerhav HaTziburi*] and continued to serve on the advisory boards of key journals in Israel studies, *AJS Perspectives*, and the Academic Studies Press series *Israel: Society, Culture, and History*.

### New Hebrew-Language Program Coordinator

**Orna Goldman** has joined the Department of Jewish Studies as the Hebrew-language program coordinator and instructor. Goldman graduated from Levinsky College of Education in Israel with a bachelor of education degree in Hebrew language and literature, and biblical literature, as well as a teacher’s certification in these subjects. She continued her studies in the United States, where she earned a master of philosophy degree in Hebrew literature from Columbia University. Goldman is also a translator and managing editor for the *Bulletin of Higher Hebrew Education*, a publication of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

### Faculty Seminars, 2016–2017

- **Tal Dekel**, Tel Aviv University: “Transnational Identities: Art, Gender, and Migration in Contemporary Israel.” *Cosponsored by the Department of Art History*
- **Yakir Englander**, Bildner Visiting Scholar: “Interfaith Dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”
- **Joshua B. Friedman**, Aresty Visiting Scholar, Bildner Center: “Seeds for the Land of Goshen: Philanthropy, Language, and Identity at Yiddish Farm”
- **Baruch J. Schwartz**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem: “The Splitting of the Sea Narrative: Exodus 14 Parted and Reunited”

### Jewish Studies Faculty, 2017–2018

#### Core Faculty

Gary A. Rendsburg, *Graduate Director*  
 Jeffrey Shandler  
 Nancy Sinkoff  
 Paola Tartakoff, *Acting Chair*  
 Azzan Yadin-Israel,  
*Undergraduate Director*  
 Yael Zerubavel,  
*Bildner Center Director*

#### Affiliated Faculty

Debra Ballentine  
 Ethel Brooks  
 Rebecca Cypess  
 Maurice J. Elias  
 Leslie E. Fishbein  
 Ziva Galili  
 Judith Gerson  
 David Greenberg  
 Charles Häberl  
 Paul Hanebrink  
 Martha Helfer  
 Michael G. Levine  
 Emma Wasserman

#### Language Instructor

Orna Goldman, *Hebrew-Language Coordinator*

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**PUBLIC PROGRAMS, FALL 2017**

**Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices**

**Jeffrey Shandler**, Rutgers University  
September 13, 7:30 p.m.

***The Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Program***  
**Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece**

**Devin E. Naar**, University of Washington  
October 15, 7:30 p.m.

**Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**

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**Scroll Down: Classical Jewish Texts on the Internet**

**Gary A. Rendsburg**, Rutgers University  
December 4, 7:30 p.m.

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