

# JEWISH STUDIES @ PENN NEWSLETTER

Annual Newsletter

Fall

2024

## University of Pennsylvania Jewish Studies Program

The Jewish Studies Program is an interdisciplinary academic group with over twenty faculty members drawn from nine departments that coordinates all courses relating to Jewish Studies in the University. Through this design, the Program integrates the riches of Jewish culture and history into the humanities and social sciences. Faculty members associated with the Program teach an average of 400 undergraduate students per year. Undergraduates may declare a major or a minor in Jewish Studies. Graduate students in different departments and schools at Penn convene conferences and reading groups within the Jewish Studies Program. Numerous events per year are open to the broader community.

Penn offers a comprehensive program in Jewish studies through its Program in Jewish Studies, the Herbert D. Katz Center for the Advanced Judaic Studies, and the Judaica Collections at the Penn Libraries.



## Penn Libraries

The Penn Libraries is home to a world-class collection of Judaica resources, including manuscripts, rare printed books, the classics, digital content, and cutting-edge scholarship for research and study by Penn faculty, students, visiting scholars, and the public.

## Katz Center

This post-doctoral research institute in the heart of historic Philadelphia enables eighteen to thirty selected scholars, at different stages in their careers and working in a variety of disciplines, to join in intellectual community, united by an annual theme. The highly competitive selection process attracts gifted applicants from North America, Israel, Europe, and Latin America. The weekly seminars in which Katz Center Fellows present their research are also attended by Penn faculty members and graduate students. By presenting their research within the colloquia and lecture series of various Penn departments, Katz Center Fellows broaden awareness of Jewish culture's integral place in the Liberal Arts curriculum.



# Joshua Teplitzky

## *Greetings from the Director, Jewish Studies Program*



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*Ruth Meltzer Director,  
Program in Jewish Studies*

**Joshua Teplitzky**

Dear friends of the Jewish Studies Program at Penn,

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and well in these difficult times. I write at a time of great uncertainty, as the war in Israel and Gaza continues, and Jews face hardship and worry on our very own campus and around the world. Our thoughts are with people who have experienced loss, and who are working to cope with the world we live in.

Even in this difficult moment, indeed in spite of and because of it, our program in Jewish Studies feels the burden of responsibility to rise to the challenge, and our faculty, students, and staff, are equipped to do so with great talent and skill.

In becoming the program director at the start of the fall of 2023, I inherited a program that is on strong footing, thanks to the energies of our team here at Penn, and to the ongoing investment and support of alumni and community members. My goal is to continue and elevate our profile, serving both the campus community and the wider world. I would like to express my gratitude to the outgoing director, Kathryn Hellerstein, for her dedication and contributions to the program. Kathryn served as program director for seven years with great care and commitment, and we wish her all the best as she turns to other projects after her many years of service.

As our campus remains at the center of national attention, our program has an important role to play in bringing careful and critical thought to bear from analysis of the past to the problems of the present. We are working to provide opportunities and venues for our community of learners to grapple with the issues of our time: conflict in Israel, contemporary antisemitism, and the vibrancy of Jewish responses to catastrophe. At the same time, we are enduringly committed to the fullness of Jewish life, history, and culture, and continue to explore not only the painful parts of Jewish experience, but also the proud. Our programming in the 23-24 academic year ranged across themes of ancient history, the richness of Jewish manuscripts and books in Penn's library, and modern memory.

I am particularly proud of two signal events this past year: last spring our graduate students organized an international conference for graduate students in Jewish Studies. The event contributed to the field of Jewish Studies as a whole, offering space for students to present their ideas and build connections with each other as a rising new generation of scholars. In April, we hosted a day-long symposium on the Study of Antisemitism, with speakers from across the United States, Europe, and Israel.

In the year to come we will be welcoming two new postdoctoral researcher to our faculty, whose scholarship and teaching will further advance our mission as a program. Our programs—online and in person—will continue to create programming for scholars and students alike that create knowledge and build understanding about the Jewish past and present.

Even with the challenges ahead, I am honored and excited about the opportunity to serve as the director of the program in Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Your ongoing support, both moral and material, are essential, and I am grateful for both those who continue to sustain our work and for new friends who grant us with opportunities to grow.

Best wishes for the new academic season.



# Across Campus & Beyond the Classroom



Top left photo: Joshua Teplitsky (left) and Harun Küçük on a walk around campus together; Ken Stern's book cover; panel on racism and free speech in academia: (from left) Charles "Chaz" Howard, Anita Allen, Jane Holahan, Fariha Khan, Mei Long, and Josh Teplitsky; and Associate Dean Beth Wenger at her 60-second lecture.

In the turbulent 2023-24 academic year, Penn Jewish Studies faculty put their knowledge, time, and energies in the service of campus community. In the wake of October 7, 2023, program director Joshua Teplitsky initiated weekly public walks with then-director of the Middle East Center, Harun Küçük, to model diplomacy and dialogue. To further understanding about the war and to bring conversation to campus, Penn Jewish Studies organized three days of sessions with Kenneth Stern, author of *The Conflict Over the Conflict*, with students, faculty, and a public lecture. Earlier, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Jewish History Beth Wenger brought understanding antisemitism into the public eye by offering a sixty-second lecture in the heart of campus. In Fall 2024, Joshua Teplitsky engaged with faculty and staff across Penn's schools at an event at the School of Dental Medicine, where members of the Penn community gathered to talk about the intersection of free speech and racism in academia.

## 2024-25 Programming

SEP 10, 2024

Incantation: The Embodied Aleph-Bet

Victoria Hanna, Simcha Gross

6:00pm | Widener Lecture Hall, Penn Museum

SEP 11, 2024

Hebrew Book Talk: *Consolation to My Mother*

Asaf Roth

12:00pm | Claudia Cohen Hall 2nd floor lounge

OCT 8, 2024

Documenting October 7: Collecting for the Sake of History

Ari Y Kelman, Raquel Ukeles

12:00pm | Zoom webinar

OCT 29, 2024

The Return to Sepharad: History and/as Fiction in Modern Jewish Literatures

Marina Mayorski

5:00pm | 543 Williams Hall

NOV 11, 2024

Traces of a Jewish Artist: The Lost Life and Work of Rahel Szalit

Kerry Wallach

5:00pm | Room 241, Van Pelt Library

NOV 14, 2024

Plague and the Persecution of Minorities: How the New Sciences of Plague Are Changing Our Understanding of Responses to the Black Death

Monica H. Green

5:15pm | College Hall 209

DEC 04, 2024

The Dreyfus Affair and the Transformation of Jewish Identity

Maurice Samuels

5:30pm | 6th Floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center

MAR 17, 2025

Gruss Jewish Law Symposium

Christine Hayes, Simcha Gross

MAR 31, 2025

The Scales of Suffering: Neo-Lachrymosity and the Writing of Jewish History

Sign up to receive event emails: [jsp-info@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jsp-info@sas.upenn.edu)





## Steve Weitzman

*Greetings from the Director, Katz Center*

This was a year full of different kinds of emotions, mostly painful, but it also brought reason for gratitude too. I want to begin by thanking my colleague Professor Kathryn Hellerstein for her service and partnership as the director of the Jewish Studies Program, and to thank the new director, Joshua Teplitsky for his wonderful humanity, positive spirit, and creativity this past year.

This year, the Katz Center devoted its fellowship program to the study of Jewish music and sound, a theme that brought to Penn an exceptionally talented cohort of scholars from North America, Israel, Europe and South America. Their projects addressed a variety of Jewish musical cultures and encompassed a range of ear-opening topics, including the use of Yiddish songs to disseminate the news, the role of Jews in developing the New York opera industry, and the depiction of the Jewish voice on the Argentinian stage.

We are very proud of having hosted such a successful fellowship program in such a difficult year, but the Katz Center, like the Jewish Studies Program, also needed to respond to recent events as well, and it has chosen to do so by supporting relevant research and public understanding. With generous support from the Goldhirsh-Yellin Foundation, the Katz center has undertaken two new initiatives, one to support deeper understanding of antisemitism, the other to support deeper understanding of Jewish life in Israel. We have just begun to develop these initiatives, but the former has already made possible a six-part series on Jews and the University that addressed topics related to anti-Jewish discrimination, admissions, and how Jewish life came to flourish on campus over the twentieth century. We aim to take this initiative to a new level by filling a post-doctoral position in antisemitism studies recently made possible by philanthropic support from some of the center's board members. The latter initiative on Jewish life in Israel is supporting a research project on how kibbutz communities are using ritual to help address the trauma of October 7 and rebuild their lives. This coming year, we are aiming to support a symposium on Jewish life in Israel in the early modern period, and to develop programs in collaboration with Israeli universities and museums.

Finally, I want to report on a very inspiring experience this year, a conference on Jewish Studies as it is developing today in different Arab countries. Participants included Egyptian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, Palestinian and Iraqi scholars speaking about the development of Jewish Studies in these different political and national contexts. The participants spanned the generations, ranging from the first Egyptian scholars to visit Israel after the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, along with younger generations that included a Palestinian sociologist who has taken the rare step of doing research in Israeli archives. The conference was the idea of former Katz Fellow Yoram Meital, a member of the center's international advisory board, and the experience was remarkable for opening new lines of connection between scholars in North America and the Arab world.

As it looks forward to a new fellowship year focused on health, medicine and the body, the Katz Center is very thankful to the many people who make it possible to support scholars and scholarship in so many ways, including the center's boards, its fellows, its staff, Jewish Studies faculty, and the University of Pennsylvania itself.

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*Director, Katz Center*

**Steve Weitzman**



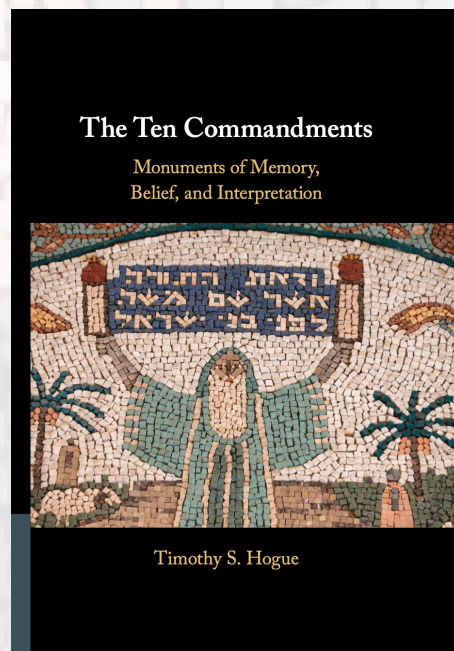
# WELCOME NEW BIBLE PROFESSOR, TIM HOGUE



**Tim Hogue** is a specialist in Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel, and he analyzes both within the broader cultural continuum of the eastern Mediterranean and West Asia. Before coming to Penn, Tim completed his doctoral work at UCLA and subsequently held a position in the History and Anthropology Department at the University of Tsukuba (Japan). His work utilizes theory and methods derived from sociolinguistics, archaeology, art history, cognitive science, religious studies, and a range of other fields to produce new analyses of biblical texts, ancient Levantine cultural practices, and the communities that first produced and interpreted them. His research draws special attention to the materiality of biblical texts and the scribal traditions that gave them shape.

In his first monograph –*The Ten Commandments: Monuments of Memory, Belief, and Interpretation* –he developed a new approach to the origins of Scripture centered on one of the Bible’s most famous texts. Based on parallels with ancient Levantine monumental inscriptions, he argued that the scribes responsible for producing and editing the Decalogue and its narrative contexts utilized known models for imbuing texts with authority and for materializing the speech of important individuals. Tim’s most recent article – “For God, King, and Country: Cult and Territoriality in the Iron Age Levant” – discusses the political functions of pilgrimage networks among Israel’s neighbors. He is currently expanding on this in a new study of Jeroboam’s golden calves, and he will continue developing this theme in planned studies on ritual movement in the Psalms and Isaiah.

At Penn, Tim looks forward to further fleshing out the world behind the Bible both in his research and in the classroom. In the fall, he’s particularly excited to integrate the Penn Museum’s Beth Shemesh and Beth Shean collections into lesson plans addressing the stories of Samson, Saul, and the Ark Narrative in 1 Samuel. He anticipates further expanding his pedagogy utilizing the unique resources at Penn. He is also actively exploring the use of programs like Unreal Engine and Blender to bring the ancient world back to life in new ways for his students.





# EVENTS

## CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM: A SYMPOSIUM ON ITS PAST AND PRESENT

### April 7: Antisemitism Symposium Sponsors

Organized by the Jewish Studies Program in the School of Arts & Sciences.  
Co-sponsored by the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Penn Carey Law School, the Department of History, and the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.



Top left photo: panelists (L to R): David Engel, Shaul Magid, Joshua Teplitsky.  
Top right photo: University of Pennsylvania Interim President, J. Larry Jameson.



The term antisemitism invokes actions, arouses passions, and enflames debate. On April 7, 2024, the Jewish Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania hosted a symposium on the history, meanings, and responses to antisemitism in the past and present. Scholars convened to discuss the ways in which the term itself has been and continues to be matter of powerful political contest, explored the relationship between antizionism and antisemitism, and considered Jewish responses to such challenges as agents of history in their own right.

## ENDOWED LECTURES

### ALEXANDER COLLOQUIUM

“Christian Supremacy: Reckoning with the Roots of Antisemitism and Racism,” with **Magda Teter** (Fordham University) on October 3, 2023. This was the 38th Annual Joseph Alexander Colloquium. Additional support came from the Jewish Studies Program, as well as from the Center for Africana Studies, and the Department of History. The Joseph Alexander Colloquium is endowed by the Joseph Alexander Foundation and the Mackler Family.

### SILVERS VISITING SCHOLAR

“The 1948 War in the Eyes of the World: From the Local to the Global,” with **Derek Penslar** (Harvard University) on February 5, 2024. This was the 28th annual Silvers Visiting Scholar Program, which is endowed by David, C’71, and Patricia, CW’72, Silvers.

Public Lecture

38th Annual Alexander Colloquium



**Dr. Magda Teter**

Professor of History and the Shvidler Chair of Judaic Studies at Fordham University, and the President of the American Academy of Jewish Research

TUES 5:15 PM **OCT 3**


The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, 3335 Woodland Walk

Sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania Jewish Studies Program, Department of History, and Center for Africana Studies.

More info & webinar link: 

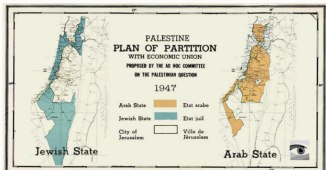
CHRISTIAN SUPREMACY  
RECKONING WITH THE ROOTS OF ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM  
MAGDA TETER

**28th Annual Silvers Visiting Scholar in Jewish Studies**



**DEREK J. PENSLAR**  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

**THE 1948 WAR IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD: FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL**




**MON, FEB 5, 2024**  
5:15 PM | Zoom webinar

Register at: [tinyurl.com/dpenslar](https://tinyurl.com/dpenslar)

Questions? E-mail: [jsp-info@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jsp-info@sas.upenn.edu)

The Silvers Visiting Scholar Program is endowed by David, C’71, and Patricia, CW’72, Silvers.

Scan here for more info!





## GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

In the Spring of 2024, the Jewish Studies Program hosted its first international graduate student conference, organized by Ben Notis (MELC), Asaf Roth (COML), Jeremy Steinberg (RELS), and Sasha Zborovsky (HIST). Nineteen up-and-coming scholars representing 14 universities in North America, Europe, and Israel came together to explore our theme: Jews and Political Authority: Citizenship, Homeland, and Diaspora. Panelists were asked to contemplate Jewish relationships to political authority from the biblical to modern era, and engage with questions such as: How have Jews imagined, constructed, and created both physical and conceptual homes under the rule of various political powers and across millennia? How did they transform non-Jewish strangers into neighbors and seemingly foreign polities into homelands?

Over the course of two days, panelists presented their work, engaged with comments and questions from other attendees, and received professional and thorough feedback from Penn JWST faculty, including Natalie Dohrmann (Katz Center), Talya Fishman (MELC), Ben Nathans (HIST), Joshua Teplitsky (HIST), and Beth Wenger (HIST). The panels and papers featured at this graduate conference brought together scholars from all corners of Jewish studies – ranging from ancient history to musicology; from political thought to literary studies – and contributed to the formation of a vibrant community of up-and-coming scholars in the field of Jewish Studies. Participants also attended an after hours tour of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History.

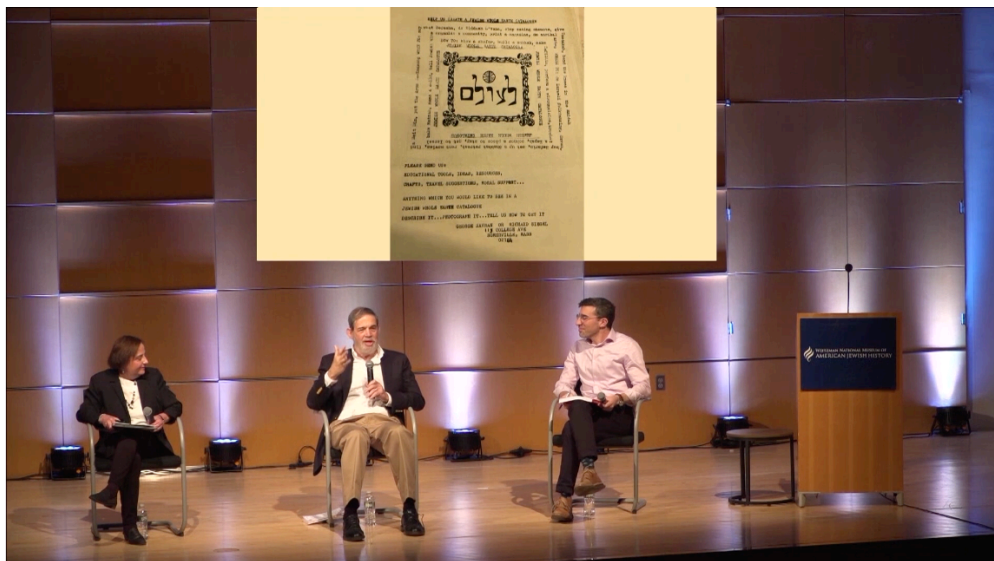


Participants and panelists at grad student conference.



Conference organizers: (L to R:) Sasha Zborovsky, Asaf Roth, Jeremy Steinberg, and Ben Notis.

## THE JEWISH CATALOG TURNS 50: REVOLUTIONARY MANIFESTO OF DIY JUDAISM.



(L to R:) Beth Wenger, Michael Strassfeld, and Joshua Teplitsky at “The Jewish Catalog Turns 50” event.

## Kutchin Family

The Kutchin Seminars are supported by the generosity of the late **Mel, C’50**, and **Mitzi Kutchin**.

## KUTCHIN SEMINAR SERIES

**Sept 19** Saskia Fischer (Leibniz Universität Hannover) on “The Antisemite as Intellectual and Storyteller”

**Oct 10** Symposium on “Laurence Salzman, A Life With Others.” This symposium celebrates the donation of the Laurence and Ayşe Gürsan-Salzman Collection to the University of Pennsylvania Libraries.

**Oct 24** Elisheva Carlebach (Columbia University) on “The Naked and the Hairy: Material Memory and Jewish Record-keeping in Early Modern Europe.” The Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies & the Herbert D. Katz Center Distinguished Fellowship in Jewish Manuscript Studies Lecture

**Nov 14** Samuel Spinner (Johns Hopkins) on Yiddish and German-Jewish literature and ethnography

**Nov 28** Benjamin Brown (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) on “Personal Authority in Contemporary Jewish Law: The Phenomenon and its Tacit Meanings.” The Caroline Zelaznik Gruss and Joseph S. Gruss Lecture in Talmudic Civil Law

**Feb 7** Rabbi Michael Strassfeld, Joshua Teplitsky (University of Pennsylvania), and Beth Wenger (University of Pennsylvania) on “The Jewish Catalog Turns 50: Revolutionary Manifesto of DIY Judaism”

**Feb 22** Sarit Kattan Gribetz (Fordham University) on “A Queen in the Tomb of the Kings: An Ancient Monument and its Modern Legacy”



# WELCOME NEW POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN JEWISH STUDIES, MARINA MAYORSKI

**Marina Mayorski** holds a BA and MA in comparative literature from Tel Aviv University. She recently received her PhD from the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Michigan. Her dissertation, titled “Guilty Pleasures: Popular Fiction and the Formation of Jewish Cultural Modernity,” examines the transnational development of popular literary culture in Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is especially interested in the role of translation and adaptation of popular fiction in shaping modern notions of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and political belonging. She will also continue working on translation of modern Ladino literature and on developing digital tools for research and pedagogy of Sephardic culture. At Penn, her research will focus on the ways in which Jewish writers and readers used popular literature to imagine their Jewish Others and construct Ashkenazi and Sephardi ethnic identities. She is looking forward to engaging Penn’s faculty and students, especially in contexts of translation theory and practice, history of the book, and digital humanities, and to conducting research in Penn’s extensive Judaica collections.

*This postdoctoral fellowship was made possible thanks to a generous philanthropic gift from the estate of **Julia Goldin, Gr’46**, given in honor and memory of her parents, Samuel and Esther Goldin and her sister, **Rosaline Goldin, Gr’40**.*



# WELCOME MARIE-SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE GLOBAL FELLOW, MARTINA MAMPIERI



**Martina Mampieri** is currently a Martin Buber Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She earned a double Ph.D. in History and Jewish Studies from the University of Roma Tre and the University of Hamburg and received fellowships from the University of Oxford, Harvard University, the University of Göttingen, the American Jewish Archives and the Rothschild Foundation among others. She has published on Jewish cultural and religious history in the early modern and modern periods.

In 2024, she will join Penn as a Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow. The project will be hosted by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (supervisor: Prof. Matteo Al Kalak) and the University of Pennsylvania (supervisor: Prof. Joshua Teplitsky), with a secondment period at the University of Amsterdam (supervisor: Prof. Emile Schrijver). As a Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow, she will work on a project entitled “BookSHUK: The International Market of Jewish Manuscripts and Books (1900-1948).” The project endeavors to provide a comprehensive historical and transnational analysis and digital visualization of scholarly and trade networks, assessing the impact of major historical events (such as WWI and WWII) on the market for Jewish manuscripts and early printed books in Europe, Mandatory Palestine (then Israel), and the United States.



# WELCOME NEW CURATOR, LAURA NEWMAN ECKSTEIN



**Laura Newman Eckstein** is the Arnold and Deanne Kaplan Collection of Early American Judaica Curator of Digital Humanities at Penn Libraries. As a curator, Laura works on creating tools, projects, and programs for digitized Judaica material for the Penn community and the community at large. Currently, she is working on two linked data projects: 1) a linked data Jewish music project 2) a linked data project for that focuses on eighteenth and nineteenth century Jewish communities in the Atlantic World. Laura is also currently a PhD candidate in the Penn history department. Her studies focus on Jews in the early Atlantic world (17th-19th centuries) with specific interests in trade networks, material culture, and digital humanities methodologies. Her dissertation examines the material culture, economics, and cultural history of the Anglo-Jewish press in the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to her doctoral studies, Laura worked as the Judaica Digital Humanities Coordinator at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. Laura holds a bachelor's degree with the highest honors in religion from Haverford College. Laura is happy to speak with students, staff, and faculty who have interest or questions about a digital project or digital methods that might be helpful to their research and studies.

# WELCOME GRUSS VISITING PROFESSOR OF TALMUDIC LAW, CHRISTINE HAYES

**Christine Hayes** is Sterling Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies in Classical Judaica at Yale University. Hayes's research interests include Talmudic-midrashic studies and the history and literature of Judaism in late antiquity. She received her PhD from UC Berkeley, and in 2023, an honorary degree from Lund University in Sweden. She is the author of numerous publications, including *What's Divine about Divine Law? Early Perspectives* (2015 National Jewish Book Award in Scholarship, a 2016 PROSE award in Theology and Religious Studies from the American Publishers Association, and a 2016 Jordan Schnitzer Award from the Association for Jewish Studies), *Between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds* (1997 Salo Baron prize) and *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities* (2003 National Jewish Book Award finalist). Her edited works include *Jewish Law and its Interactions with other Legal Systems* (2014), the *Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law* (2017), *Classic Essays in Rabbinic Culture and History* (2018), and most recently *The Literature of the Sages: A Revisioning* (2023). She is active in professional and academic organizations and served as President of the Association for Jewish Studies. She is a senior faculty fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. She is currently working on a book of humor and play in rabbinic literature.





# GRADUATE STUDENTS

## MARGARET SCHOENFELD FALK FELLOWSHIP

The Jewish Studies Program administers the Margaret Schoenfeld Falk Fellowship. The Falk Fellowship was endowed by Edward Falk, W'66, in memory of his mother, Margaret Schoenfeld Falk, to support graduate students in the School of Arts & Sciences who work specifically in an area of Jewish Studies. The Falk Fellowship is one of the most valuable elements of the Jewish Studies Program at Penn. Because of Ed's foresight in establishing the Fellowship, Penn is able to ensure the future of Jewish Studies in America and to educate and produce the scholars and teachers of tomorrow.

### NEW FALK FELLOWS IN 2024



Karine Macarez

**Karine Macarez** joined Penn's French program this Fall. A historian and literary scholar, she holds an MA in History from La Sorbonne and an MA in French literature from the University of Texas at Austin. Her research exploits mediums, such as postcards and sound archives, to examine media's influence on the spread of French antisemitism, particularly during the Dreyfus Affair and World War II.



Elyakim Suissa

**Elyakim Engelmann-Suissa** holds a BA in History from the University of Pennsylvania, and an MA in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures from the University of Washington. As an incoming PhD student, Elyakim specializes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman Jewish religious and intellectual history. He is particularly curious about religious legal literature and its effects on shaping a cohesive network of communities across cities and urban institutions. He looks forward to further studying Jewish responsa and influences on religious thought among Ottoman Jewish communities in languages that include Hebrew, Ottoman Turkish, and Arabic.



Chaya Sara Oppenheim

### NEW FALK FELLOWS IN 2023

**Chaya Sara Oppenheim** holds a BA in English and history from Barnard College. In Penn's Comparative Literature & Literary Theory PhD Program, she plans to explore the work of women writers and the interplay of language mixing, including Hebrew and Yiddish, in contemporary Jewish American literature.

**Ezra Leibovitz** joined Penn's Comparative Literature Program as a PhD student in the Fall of '23. Originally from New Jersey, he holds his BA in comparative literature from Harvard University. His work focuses on early 20th century modernist literature and the Yiddish avant garde.



Ezra Leibovitz



## GRADUATE STUDENT ALUMNI NEWS

**Sonia Gollance** (PhD, Germanic Languages and Literatures, 2017) is Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Yiddish at University College London in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies. She has published articles in *Prooftexts*, *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, and *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*. Gollance served as guest co-editor and introduction co-author of two journal special issues: a special issue of *In geveb* on “Murder, Lust, and Laughter, or, Shund Theatre” (April 2023) together with Joel Berkowitz and Nick Underwood and a special issue of *Feminist German Studies* on “When Feminism and Antisemitism Collide” (39.1, July 2023) together with Kerry Wallach. She has joined the AJS Task Force and the *In geveb* editorial board. Gollance is currently translating Tea Arciszewska’s modernist play, *Miryeml* (1958).

In the fall of 2022, **Marc Herman** (PhD, NELC, 2016) joined the faculty of York University in Toronto as an assistant professor in the Department of Humanities and a core member of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies. He presented papers this year at the World Congress for Jewish Studies, Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies, Association for Jewish Studies, and other venues. He published two book reviews and submitted his monograph on the interface of Jewish and Islamic legal theory for review.

In 2022-23, **Alon Tam** (PhD, NELC, 2018) has been a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Azrieli Center for Israel Studies in Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He promoted new research on mobilities and migrations of Egyptian Jews in regional and global contexts. Tam has also continued his major work on the social, cultural, and urban history of the Jewish community in Cairo: he wrote two forthcoming articles on those topics; participated in innovative collaborative research projects on Jews of the modern Middle East; and lectured on the subject in high-profile academic conferences in the US and Israel.

**Kerry Wallach** (PhD, Germanic Languages and Literatures, 2011) is Associate Professor and Chair of German Studies and an affiliate of the Jewish Studies Program at Gettysburg College. She recently served as co-editor for two projects. The volume *German-Jewish Studies: Next Generations* (Berghahn Books, 2023), was co-edited by Aya Elyada and supported by the Leo Baeck Institute New York. Together with Sonia Gollance, Wallach co-authored the introduction and served as guest editor for a special issue of *Feminist German Studies* on “When Feminism and Antisemitism Collide” (39.1, July 2023). Wallach’s second monograph, *Traces of a Jewish Artist: The Lost Life and Work of Rahel Szalit*, was published by Penn State University Press in spring 2024.

### PENN GLOBAL FELLOW, SASHA ZBOROVSKY

*Graduate Student, Alexandra Sasha Zborovsky, was selected as one of 10 recipients of the newly instituted Penn Global Fellowship. This funding allowed her to extend her time conducting research on her dissertation in the Netherlands.*

The archivists at the Nationaal Archief never truly overcame their confusion at my presence in The Hague. I was studying the Soviet Union with a dissertation that investigated Jewish emigration from the USSR in the mid-to-late twentieth century. What could the Dutch National Archive possibly have to offer? I understood their bemusement. When I began my PhD in 2020 it only seemed natural that the archival portion of my research would take me to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Odessa, and Jerusalem. Tulip fields and herring stands were not in my future. It was the onset of war in Eastern Europe and the Middle East that shifted my plans.

With generous funding from both Penn’s Jewish Studies Program and the University of Pennsylvania’s newly instituted Penn Global Dissertation Grant I had the opportunity to creatively reassess my approach to archival research. As I sifted through my notes, I recalled that even though the fate of Soviet Jews intertwined the USSR and Israel on the world stage, the two states had no diplomatic relations for most of the latter’s existence. The Dutch government served as a mediator between the two. With language courses interspersed, I had the opportunity to travel to the Hague throughout March, July, and August. Records still classified in Russian and Israeli archives lay before on a mid-century modern reading table in the Hague. The observations of Dutch diplomats stationed across Moscow, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv, offered an entirely new perspective on the history of Soviet Jewish emigration; a narrative typically layered with biases fomented by the Cold War and clashing nationalisms.

No historian wishes for strife or violence to affect their region of study. However, such misfortunes, when they do transpire, can shift the directions of our work in unexpected but important ways.



# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

## Undergraduate Student Jewish Studies Research Celebrated



In Spring 2023, (L to R) **Hannah Goldberg, C'22**; **Tyler Kliem, C'24**, and Prof. Kathryn Hellerstein.



In Spring 2024, (L to R) Prof. Joshua Teplitsky, **Olivia Haynie, C'24**; **Tyler Kliem, C'24**; and **Eliana Suldán, C'24**.

### Prizes for Excellence

The Samuel Esther Goldin Endowment Award: **Hannah Goldberg, C'22**

The Moshe Greenberg Prize for Excellence in Hebrew: **Leah Lerner, C'23**

The Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring Prize in Yiddish Studies: **Jinlong (Jeremiah) Yang, C'23**

The Charlotte Yiddish Institute Book Prizes: **Aiden Adams, C'23**

The Judah Goldin Memorial Prize for Excellence in Advanced Hebrew Studies: **Ari Portal, C'23**

The Samuel Esther Goldin Endowment Award: **Tyler Kliem, C'24**

The Moshe Greenberg Prize for Excellence in Hebrew: **Anna Leventhal, C'24**

The Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring Prize in Yiddish Studies: **Michael Schwab, C'24**

The Charlotte Yiddish Institute Book Prizes: **Pandora Schoen, C'26**; **Eliana Suldán, C'24**; **Yitzzy Tanner, C'24**; **Amalya Knapp, C'26**; **Michael Schwab, C'24**

The Judah Goldin Memorial Prize for Excellence in Advanced Hebrew Studies: **Eliana Suldán, C'24**

### Research Grants and Fellowships

The Jewish Studies program encourages student research by offering research grants and fellowships through the Philip E. Goldfein Scholarship Fund, the Raymond and Ruth Brenner Awards in Jewish Studies, and the Louis Schwartz and Elaine Friedman Schwartz Memorial Fund. The following Undergraduate awards were made in 2023:

- **Isaac Tanner, C'24**, for attendance with Dr. David Weiss (Department of Psychology) at the 5th Annual Medicine and Ethics Conference.
- **Olivia Haynie, C'24**, for research on American synagogues and their different approaches to Israel.
- **Evie Klein, C'24**, for research on ethnic humor.
- **Tyler Kliem, C'24**, toward participation at the 2022 Association of Jewish Studies annual conference.

The following Undergraduate awards were made in 2024:

- **Tyler Kliem, C'24**, for investigating contemporary and modernist Hebrew/Yiddish type in practice.
- **Madeline Kohn, C'26**, for research on boundary identities in pre-war Transylvania Jewish life.

2023

2024



# UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIPS

## Penn Undergraduate Research Mentoring Program



**Hannah Shumsky, C'24, and Isaiah Weir, C'24**, under the guidance of Dr. Joshua Teplitsky, studied the library of Rabbi David Oppenheim, the Chief Rabbi of Prague from 1703-1736. His library is regarded as one of the most important collections of Jewish books of the Early Modern Period.

## Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History Summer Interns

**Ellie Goluboff-Schragger, C'24; Emily Scolnick, C'24**

At our internship at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History this summer 2024, we had the chance to work with the Education, Development, and Public Programs departments to see what goes into making a cultural institution like this one function each day. We helped out with events and programs, including family days and a book release event featuring Governor Josh Shapiro, and supported the Development team during preparations for and follow ups from the museum's annual fundraising gala. Through this experience, we went behind the scenes and learned how a cultural and educational institution like this operates and its role in educating the public. It was cool to discover the importance of this institution as both a center for Jewish life and in its capacity to educate non-Jews about Jewish history.

## Meltzer Interns



“Anti-Semitism in Black and White: Why hatred of Jews crosses racial boundaries,” a conversation with Dr. Steven Weitzman and Dr. Anthea Butler on December 7, 2022, cosponsored with Katz Center and Religious Studies. Organized by **Lilah Katz, C'24**.



Interns: (L to R:) Emily Scolnick and Ellie Goluboff-Schragger.



“Meat & Dairy & Love,” with Rabbanit Leah Sarna on February 1, 2023. Organized by **Isaac Tanner, C'23**.

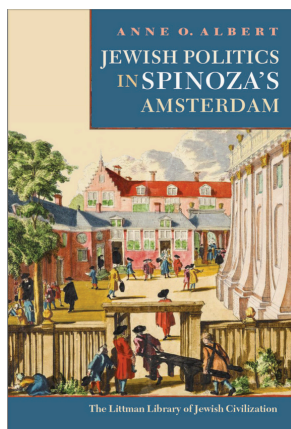
Claire Schwartz (*Jewish Currents*) in conversation with Dr. Samantha Pious (poet, translator, editor, medievalist) on April 17, 2023, cosponsored with Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing. Organized by **David Katz, C'25**.



“Battling Foodways and Halakhic Folkways: The Case of Peanut Oil on Passover,” with Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff on March 28, 2023. Organized by **Isaac Tanner, C'23**.

“Jewish Involvement in the American Revolution,” with Dr. Arthur Kiron on April 18, 2023. Organized by **Vincent Lepani, C'25**.





**Anne Oravetz Albert** is the Katz Center's Klatt Family Director for Public Programs and executive editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. Her book, *Jewish Politics in Spinoza's Amsterdam* (Littman, 2023) was the finalist for the 2023 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in the category of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, awarded by the Association for Jewish Studies.

**Joseph Benatov** is the director of the Modern Hebrew Language Program and Associate Program Director of Jewish Studies. He teaches Hebrew courses at the intermediate and advanced levels. During the 2023-24 academic year, Dr. Benatov served as faculty advisor for Penn's undergraduate journal *Kedma*. Benatov gave talks at Fordham University, Susquehanna University, and The Orange County Jewish Genealogical Society and was a guest lecturer for an online course at the University of Delaware.

**Alexander (Sender) Botwinik** is a Yiddish lecturer. In December, Botwinik accompanied Yiddish singer Richard Lenatsky, tenor, at a live concert at the Haverford College Yiddish Culture Festival, and they performed at a klezmer event this spring. He was recently presented the Isadore L. Kirschner Teacher of the Year Award, with his name added to the plaque that hangs in the main hallway at Har Zion. The award is sponsored by Michael and Patty Kirschner in memory of Michael's father, a longtime supporter of Jewish education at Har Zion. He is currently preparing a second album of the music of his late father David Botwinik, devoted to Yiddish children's songs (info: [www.Botwinikmusic.com](http://www.Botwinikmusic.com)).

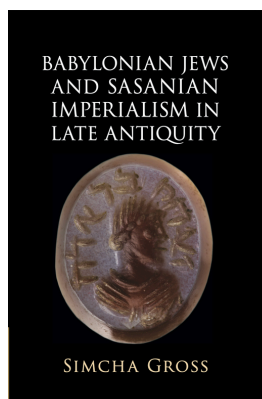
**Natalie B. Dohrmann** is Associate Director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, coeditor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, and an area editor for the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*. Her recent publications include: "Problematizing the Midrashic Book in an Imperial Landscape," in *Jewish Culture and Creativity*, ed., E. Fishbane and E. Russ-Fishbane (Academic Studies Press, 2023); "Roman War, Rabbinic Law, and Provincial Sovereignism," in *Unrest in the Roman Empire: A Discursive History*, ed. L. Eberle and M. Lavan (Campus Verlag, 2024) "Roman Civil Jurisdiction, Nezikin, and Rabbinic Professionalization in the Second Century," part of a forum on Y. Furstenberg's "The Rabbinic Movement from Pharisees to Provincial Jurists" (*JSJ* 54 [2023]), *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 55.1 (2024); and is currently coediting *Worlds of Jewish Law: Premodern Legal Cultures in the Making* with Marc Herman and Micha J. Perry. In August 2024 she delivered the keynote address at the Jewish Law Association meeting at Harvard Law School.



**Talya Fishman**, MELC Associate Professor, taught courses that aimed to grapple with Jewish, Muslim, and Christian relations, including "Jews Write Their History", a seminar on Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise, and "Jewish Political Thought and Action." In a new course, students designed a Middle School curriculum on "Abrahamic Faiths and Cultures" for Middle School students. Next semester it will be taught as a social studies unit in certain West Philadelphia schools. Two articles by Professor Fishman were published in 2023-2024: "Anchor to Springboard: Uses and Revaluations of Masorah in Medieval Ashkenaz", *Emet le-Ya'akov: Facing the Truths of History: In Honor of Jacob J. Schacter* (2023), and "The Importance of Matter in Profet Duran's Ma'aseh Eford and in Catalan Jewish Thought", in *Beloved David—Advisor, Man of Understanding, and Writer: A Festschrift in Honor of David Stern* (2024). Forthcoming essays: "The 12th Century Controversy Over Sefer HaMa'or: A Cultural Misunderstanding that Went Unnoticed", to be published in a *Festschrift for Professor Bernard Septimus* (Harvard University Press), and "Medieval Jewish Subcultures Receive the Talmudic Text: The Impact of Regional Trends and Antecedent Oral Cultures," to appear in a collection called, *What is the Talmud* (Harvard University Press).

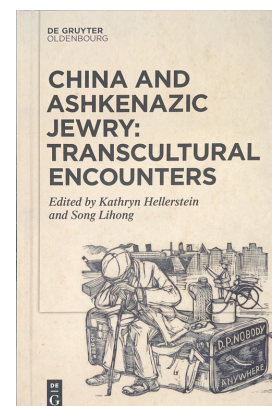


**Nili Gold** is Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at MELC. Her books include *Heifa ahuvati* (2018)—the Hebrew version of her 2017 book *Haifa: City of Steps*—and the literary biography *Yehuda Amichai: The Making of Israel's National Poet* (2008). The Hebrew translation of the biography, *Vehaga'agu'im sgurim be*, appeared in 2019 and the book has now been translated for publication in China and is forthcoming. In August 2024, Gold published an article presenting new biographical revelations on Amichai in *Jewish Quarterly Review*. Earlier in 2024, she published her latest book, *Lalekhet barehovot hapnimitiyim*, a coauthored (with Y. Schwartz) Hebrew collection of articles on Yoel Hoffmann.

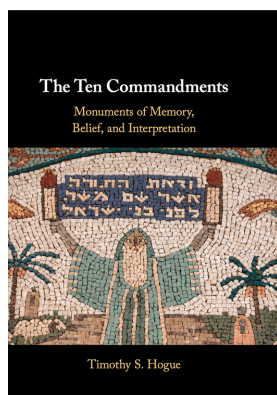


**Simcha Gross'** first monograph, *Babylonian Jews and Sasanian Imperialism in Late Antiquity*, was published by Cambridge University Press in early 2024. The book offers a new account of one of the most important periods in Jewish history, which shaped the worlds of the Babylonian rabbis who produced the Talmud. He co-edited a special issue of *Jewish Studies Quarterly* on "The Making of the Rabbinic Past," and authored a number of recent publications. He has recently held fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship for Experienced Researchers, the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies in Spring 2024, and he was named an honorary fellow at the Harry Starr Fellowship for Judaic Studies at Harvard University for the year 2024-2025.

**Kathryn Hellerstein**, professor of Yiddish in the Department of Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies (FIGS), reviewed Amelia M. Glaser's *Songs in Dark Times: Yiddish Poetry of Struggle from Scottsboro to Palestine* in *Slavic Review*, and has an article, "Retelling Jewish American Literature through Women Writers," forthcoming in *The Future of American Jewish Pasts* from Penn Press. She presented papers at two conferences: "Placing Jewish American Women Poets as Anthologists of Translations (1966-1999) into Context," at the conference, "Making the Canon, Breaking the Canon: The Task of the Translator," Emory University, and "Chava Rosenfarb's Poetry," at a conference on Chava Rosenfarb and Jewish Female Writers of The 20th Century at the Center for The Study of Jewish Culture at the Faculty of Philology, University of Lodz and the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Lodz, Poland. As a recipient of a Yiddish Book Center Translation Fellowship, she continued work on her "Women Yiddish Poets: Anthology."



**Joshua Jeffers** is the Lecturer in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew Language in the NELC Department, and he teaches the elementary and intermediate courses for those languages at Penn. For his most recent project related to the Akkadian language, he is a co-author of the text edition publication, *The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etel-ilāni (630–627), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria, Parts 1–3*. The first volume appeared in November 2018, part 2 was published in 2022, and the final volume appeared in 2023.



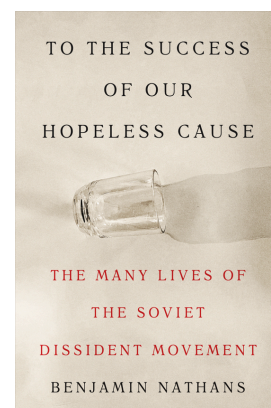
**Tim Hogue** joined the Penn community in Fall 2023. His first book, *The Ten Commandments: Monuments of Memory, Belief, and Interpretation* was published by Cambridge in 2023, and he recently published an open access article on the golden calves titled "Bulls on Parade: Metal Bovines, Pilgrimage Networks, and the Struggle for Israelite Identity in 1 Kings 12:25-33" (available at <https://avarjournal.com/avar/article/view/2848>). He was also invited to present new research on the Shema at the 2024 Lavy Colloquium on Jewish Monumentality at Johns Hopkins University in May; this study drew on the Penn Museum collections to better elucidate the jewelry implied by the commands in Deuteronomy 6.



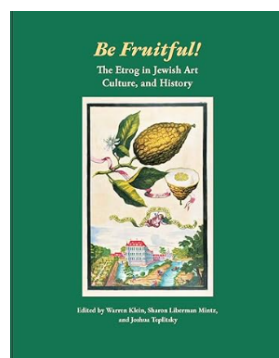
**Arthur Kiron** is the Schottenstein-Jesselson Curator of Judaica Collections, head of the Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, and Adjunct Assistant Professor of History. During the 2023-24 academic year, he completed several multi-year projects, including the donation of Gratz College-Eric Mandell Jewish Music collection, considered one of the three most important collections of Jewish music in the world; he organized a public exhibition and symposium, “Laurence Salzman: A Life with Others”, as well as a conference marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Jewish Catalog*, held at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History. He contributed to the publication of a “White Paper” of best practices to handle Judaica provenance questions for an international working group based at the National Library of Israel; he moderated a panel about Nazi-looted Jewish books at the annual Association of Jewish Library; and continues to serve on the editorial board of *Judaica Librarianship*. He served on multiple internal Penn Libraries working groups and faculty committees, and on numerous other professional, academic, and communal advisory boards.

**Ian Lustick**, the Bess W. Heyman Professor (Emeritus) in the Department of Political Science, has this year published articles on Israel, the Israel-Palestine conflict, antisemitism and settler-colonialism, and on academic freedom issues affecting those who teach and write about these topics: “Israel on the Cusp: Democracy in Peril or an Opportunity for Regime Change?” *Israel Studies Review* (Spring 2024) Vol. 39, no.1 pp. 83-103. “Sitting on the Third Rail: Studying Israelis and Palestinians, Then and Now,” *APSA MENA Newsletter* (Spring 2024) Vol. 7, no. 1 pp. 11-21. “Old and New Strategies for Exploiting Structural Change in Palestine/Israel: A Review Essay,” *Palestine/Israel Review* (March 2024), Vol. I, no. 1; and “Must Every Golem Die?” *Palestine/Israel Review* (April 2024) Vol. I, no. 1. He spoke this September at a plenary session of the American Political Science Association’s annual convention on “Implications of the Israel-Gaza Crisis for the Middle East and Beyond.”

**Benjamin Nathans** published several recent essays, including “The Longue Durée of Dark Humor” in the journal *Ab Imperio* and (in Russian) “How Andrei Sakharov Became a Democrat” in the *Moscow Times*. His book *To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Soviet Dissident Movement* is out this summer from Princeton University Press. Nathans delivered the annual Simon Dubnow lecture at the Leipzig Institute for Jewish History and Culture, “Jews, Dissidents, Soviets: The Disenchantment of Socialism” (in German). In spring 2024, he taught a 15-week seminar for Philadelphia public school teachers on “The Soviet Century: Russia, Socialism, and the Modern World.” In July 2023, Nathans became director of the Integrated Studies Program at Penn.



**Heather J. Sharkey** served as chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (now the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures). With Cosette Bruhns Alonso, Contemporary Publishing Fellow in the Penn Libraries, she published an article in the May 2024 issue of the *Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy* entitled “Digital Publishing with Students in Scalar: Pedagogical Opportunities, Challenges, and Collaborative Approaches to Creating ‘A Case Study of The Sephardic Heritage Cookbook.’” She led a class project of her Spring 2023 food history seminar to publish a digital book centered on *The Sephardic Heritage Cookbook* (2017), a community cookbook developed by members of Temple Tifereth Israel in Los Angeles.



**Joshua Teplitsky** joined the Penn community in Fall 2022 year as the Meyerhoff Chair and Associate Professor in the History Department, and became the Ruth Meltzer Director of the Program in Jewish Studies in Fall 2023. In September of 2023, Prof. Teplitsky published an edited book, *Be Fruitful! The Etrog in Jewish Art, Culture, and History* (with Sharon Liberman Mintz and Warren Klein). His first book, *Prince of the Press* has just been translated and published in Czech as *Kniže knih: Jak jeden sběratel vybudoval nejtrvalejší a nejpozoruhodnější židovskou knihovnu v dějinách*.





**Liliane Weissberg**, Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor in Arts and Science, published *Die herrliche Disciplin. Michael Bernays und die Anfänge der Neugermanistik in München* (with Ernst Osterkamp). Her exhibition “What is Enlightenment? Questions for the Eighteenth Century” will open at the German Historical Museum in Berlin in October, and be accompanied by German and English catalogs. She received a major award from the German Kulturstiftung des Bundes and was elected one of the most prominent Berliners 2024 by the Berlin press. In Spring 2023, she was a Senior Fellow at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies (IFK) at the University of Art and Design Linz in Vienna, Austria .

Since the darkest days of Covid, **Steven Weitzman** has been focused on writing “A History of Signs and Wonders,” a reception history of the biblical story of the Ten Plagues that explores the various ways the story has been interpreted and reimagined by Jews, Christians and Muslims. He was at last able to complete a draft this last year and also completed revisions for the fourth edition of *The Jews: a History*, coauthored with John Efron and Matthias Lehmann.

**Beth S. Wenger**, Moritz and Josephine Berg Professor of History, is Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences. Her remarks on receiving the Lee Max Friedman Award Medal appeared in the October 2023 issue of *American Jewish History*. She has become coeditor (with Marsha Rozenblit) of the *Modern Jewish Experience* series at Indiana University Press. Wenger’s coedited anthology (with Lila Corwin Berman and Deborah Dash Moore), *The Future of American Jewish Pasts*, will be published by University of Pennsylvania Press.

**Julia Wilker** is Associate Professor of Classical Studies and has continued to serve as Chair of the Graduate Group in Ancient History. Her main research interests lie in the eastern Mediterranean in Hellenistic and Roman times with a focus on Judean and Jewish history. In 2023-24, she gave papers at Princeton, the meeting of the European Association of Jewish Studies, Frankfurt, and Osnabrück (Germany). Publications in print in the field of Jewish Studies include the chapter on the history of Judea from the Maccabean Revolt to the Jewish War for the *Handbook of the Septuagint*, and an article on the reign of King Aristobulus I of Judea (105-104 BCE) as a historical event, as a moment in collective Judean memory, and as framed in the historiographical tradition. She is about to finish the manuscript of a biography of Julia Berenice, the great-granddaughter of the Judean king Herod, as one of the most prominent women in the Roman Empire in the later first century CE.

## IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the passing of **Dan Ben-Amos**, cherished professor of Folklore and Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, who died during the Spring 2023 semester. His more than fifty-year career at Penn began in 1967 as a scholar and teacher of African, Jewish, and Middle Eastern folklore in the Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Department. He also served as professor and chairman of the Department of Folklore and Folklife. Dan was a beloved husband, father, friend, teacher, and colleague to so many. He also was a vigorous library patron whose research plumbed the depths of our Judaica collections and pushed us to build it in creative ways, including by means of his donations of rare books, obscure Hebrew translations of world folklore literature, and through regular gifts of ephemeral printings of weekly, orally delivered religious sermons. As anyone who ever met Dan knows, he was such a warm and generous soul, whose twinkling eyes revealed a keen wit and whose words radiated deep wells of wisdom. He will be profoundly missed.





# JUDAICA AT THE PENN LIBRARIES

The Judaica collections at Penn continued to grow as an integrated unit within the Penn Libraries system under the management of **Arthur Kiron**, Schottenstein-Jesselson Curator of Judaica Collections. The full-time staff of the Library at the Katz Center are **Dr. Bruce Nielsen**, Judaica Public Services Librarian and Archivist; and **Josef Gulka, G'70**, who manages circulation services.

## NEW JUDAICA COLLECTION GIFTS AND ACQUISITIONS

A highlight acquisition: Jorge Luis Borges' handwritten draft of "Yo, Judío" sent to Megáfono magazine editor Sigrifido Radaelli (and later published in April 1934). Borges is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century and a generative creative spirit of Latin American magical realism. Here Borges confronts an accusation leveled by the Nazi-associated Argentine magazine *Crisol* that he concealed a purported Jewish ancestry. In response, Borges notes that he is not actually Jewish, despite the Portuguese Converso associations with his maternal grandmother's family name ("Azvedo") but wryly noted that he would have been proud should it have been the case.

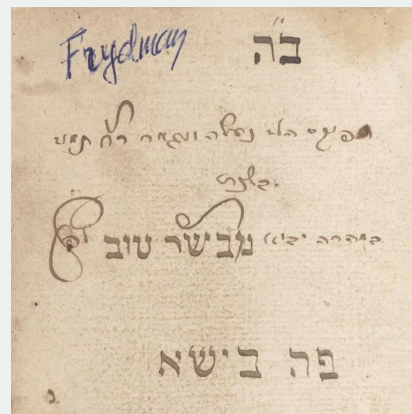
## IN MEMORIAM

Penn's Judaica Collections mourn the passing of **Louise Strauss, C'82**. (March 31, 1960–February 27, 2024). A member of the Katz Center's board of advisors, Louise also devoted more than a decade of her life volunteering at the Library at the Katz Center. From 2008 until the onset of COVID, Louise worked with unbreakable perseverance to single-handedly catalog the Lenkin Family Collection of Photography, consisting of over 5,000 early photographs of the Land of Israel, dating from 1850 to 1937, consulting the handwritten notebooks in French of the original collectors, Bertrand and Paola Lazard.

Louise further worked to revise legacy archival finding aids to collections at the Library at the Katz Center and to archivally process unprocessed collections. Above all, we remember Louise for her self-effacing spirit, her sensitivity, her sense of humor, her devotion to public service and her caring heart. She loved tennis and transatlantic steamers, whose history she avidly collected, served as a volunteer archivist at the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center before coming to the Library at the Katz Center. She graduated from Penn in 1982 and loved the University, going so far as to customize her license plate to celebrate her graduating class. Following in the footsteps of her parents, Ione Apfelbaum Strauss, the former chair of the board of the Katz Center, and Louise's father Hilary Strauss, she joined the board of the Katz Center. One of Louise's last acts as a Katz Center board member was to endow the Center's rare book in memory of her parents. Her contributions to the history of the Katz Center, to the preservation and access to the cultural heritage that document that history, and to scholarship writ large will never be forgotten.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

**Exhibition: Laurence Salzmänn: A Life with Others**, curated by Prof. Jason Francisco, was displayed in Fall 2023 in the Goldstein Family Gallery of the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library. Salzmänn's collection was donated to the Penn Libraries in 2018 as part of the Gürsan-Salzmänn Collection. The exhibition was accompanied by a symposium and a catalogue, written by Jason Francisco, which is the definitive study, comprehensive monograph of Salzmänn's sixty-year career in photography. <https://www.laurencesalzmänn.com/a-life-with-others>



Title page of the Avraham Friemann's Pinkus Bischeim, recording circumcisions he performed in 1798 (CAJS Rare MS 493, from the Moldovan Family Judaica Collection, Penn Libraries).

**The SIMS / Herbert D. Katz Center Distinguished Fellowship in Jewish Manuscript Studies, funded in part by the David Ruderman Distinguished Scholar fund**, pairs a prominent scholar in any field of Jewish studies with a manuscript in one of our rare Judaica collections. Working with **Lynn Ransom**, SIMS Curator and **Natalie Dohrmann**, Associate Director of the Katz Center, **Arthur Kiron**, the Schottenstein-Jesselson Curator helped to coordinate the fifth SIMS-Katz manuscript research fellowship, in partnership with the Katz Center, the Kislak Center, and the Jewish Studies Program.

In the Fall 2023, **Elisheva Carlebach**, Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture, and Society at Columbia University, delivered the annual lecture, titled "The Naked and the Hairy: Material Memory and Jewish Record-keeping in Early Modern Europe" on the material history and importance of *pinkasim*, Jewish communal ledger books of early modern Europe.



## SPECIAL ACQUISITIONS (SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS)

**Rare manuscript ledger of 'Travel protection' taxes levied against German Jewish Communities recorded between 1685–1686.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Library at the Katz Center Rare Judaica Endowment.

**Hebrew manuscript compilation of *segulot* (remedies), *hashba'ot* (oaths) amulets and texts for incantation bowls to protect against demons, the evil eye and to treat love sickness, help conceiving and with childbirth.** 18th/19th c. Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

**Hebrew manuscript written on parchment of prayers against plagues (Italy, 18th/19th c.).** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Library at the Katz Center Rare Judaica Endowment.

**Handwritten commentary on the Hebrew Bible by Rabbi Yitshak Zerahyah Azulai the father of Hayim Yosef David Azulai, the HIDA, the most important and prolific Sephardic rabbi of the 18th century), Istanbul, ca. 1741, with marginalia in the hand of HIDA.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

**18th century Hebrew manuscript anthology of sample letters and language, by Moroccan Jewish religious scholars, including from the Ibn Tzur rabbinic family, copied in cursive maghrebi (North African) script.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

18th century Hebrew manuscript anthology of sample letters and language, by Moroccan Jewish religious scholars, including from the Ibn Tzur rabbinic family, copied in cursive maghrebi (North African) script. The manuscript includes two anthologies of sample letters and poetic expressions titled *Leshon Limudim*, one by R. Yaakov Ibn Tzur (also known as the "Yaavets"), with letters by other Moroccan Torah scholars (some unpublished) and the other by R. Shaul Serero as well as a third work, *Leshon hahamim*, a dictionary of rhyming expressions, by R. Yitshak ben Yehudah ha-kohen Rapaport. Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies



**Unpublished Hebrew manuscript commentary, entirely in the hand of Rabbi Moshe Chagiz, the famous 18th century Sephardic rabbi and anti-Sabbatian polemicist, on Aggadot in the Talmud, including tractates Shabbat and Eruvin with annotations and references to the commentaries on Aggadah appearing in the works of Rabbi Shlomo Algazi.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Barney and Eleanor Frommer Judaica Endowment.

**Tsarist Russia Government Edict, printed in Moscow, 1839, granting Jews of the Russian Empire limited rights to be elected to City Councils but not to exceed one-third of the total number of representatives.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Margolies Judaica Fund.

**Unpublished Hebrew manuscript, *Shesh kenafayim* [Six Wings], a compilation of homilies on the Mishnah was copied by Reuben ben Abraham Mosheh in Quba (Azerbaijan) and completed on Monday, the 20th of Av 1871.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

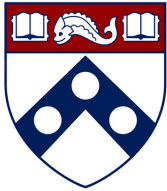
**Hebrew manuscript compilation of hundreds of Syrian Jewish *bakashot* (petitionary prayers) and *piyutim* (liturgical poems), copied in Aleppo (Syria) in the late 19th Century, in its original binding with a leather spine.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

**Decorated Ketubah (Jewish marriage contract) from Damascus (Syria), dated 15th Tammuz 1898.** Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Elis and Ruth Douer Endowment for Sephardic Studies.

**Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the earliest known publication in Yiddish translation: *Romeo un Zshulyete: tragedya in finf aktn* [*Romeo and Juliet: Tragedy in Five Acts*].** Acquired thanks to the support of the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

**Anne Frank. *Weet Je Nog? Verhalen en Sprookje* ["Do you Remember? Stories and Fairy Tales."] Acquired thanks to the generous support of the Mark Zucker Judaica Endowment.**





# Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies

## The Annual Fellowship Program

The Katz Center's international postdoctoral fellowship program has served as a model for similar institutions since its inception. Intellectual camaraderie is the essence of the experience for fellows at all stages of their academic careers. During the year the fellows work on their individual projects alongside scholars with diverse but focused interests, draw on our collections and the expertise of our librarians, and meet to discuss their ongoing research. Penn faculty and graduate students are always welcome at the weekly Ruth Meltzer seminars, which take place at the Katz Center, and fellows have ample opportunity to get involved with the academic life on Penn's campus. The Center's Meyerhoff Lecture brings a notable speaker to campus in partnership with the History Department and the Jewish Studies Program each year. A new lecture series, established in memory of Katz Center board member Howard Jay Reiter, shares the riches of Israeli scholarship with the University of Pennsylvania community. Fellows and other invited scholars present the findings of the year's research and open new avenues of inquiry at the Spring Colloquium, open to the wider academic community. Editors chosen from among the fellows edit a volume that is published by Penn Press as part of the Jewish Culture and Contexts Series

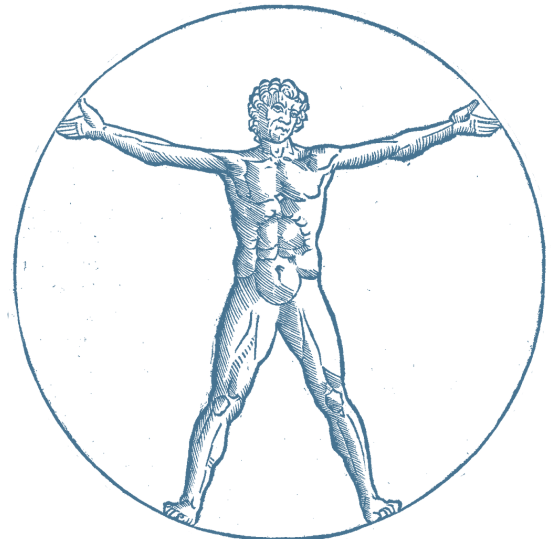
## Looking Ahead: 2025–2026: New Frontiers in Contemporary Jewish Life: Cultural Expansions, Encounters, and Experiments

Contemporary Jewish life constitutes an ever-expanding cultural landscape, teeming with multiple possibilities for doing and being Jewish. Individuals, groups, and institutions are imagining and pushing forward new Jewish formations to create and inhabit previously uncharted territories. It is to these new frontiers of Jewish life that the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies devotes its fellowship program in 2025–26.

The Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania is a global leader in the study of Jewish civilization, opening new vistas in the humanities and social sciences. With a prestigious fellowship program, a vast Judaica library, and a leading scholarly journal, the Katz Center links scholars to scholars, researchers to resources, and ideas to the wider world.

## This Year: Jews and Health

The 2024–25 fellowship year is devoted to supporting new research at the intersection of Jewish studies and the study of health, medicine, and the body. The cohort of scholars will look at illness health in Jewish life and thought through a range of lenses: examining institutions and social systems, histories of medicine, gender, literary discourse, and social sciences using data drawn from antiquity to the present.



## 2024–2025 Fellows

**Natalia Aleksion** | University of Florida  
**Carmen Caballero Navas** | University of Granada  
**Grazia De Michele** | University of Genoa  
**Anabella Esperanza** | Tel Aviv University  
**Adam S. Ferziger** | Bar Ilan University  
**Alexandria Frisch** | George Mason University  
**Ahuvia Goren** | Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
**Magdalena Janosikova** | The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute  
**Lennart Lehnhaus** | University of Tübingen  
**Rivka Neriya-Ben Shahaar** | Sapir College  
**Uzi Rebhun** | Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
**Joshua Teplitsky** | University of Pennsylvania  
**Marek Tuszewicki** | Jagiellonian University in Krakow  
**Carla Vieira** | School of Social Sciences and the Humanities, NOVA University of Lisbon  
**Sarah Wolf** | Jewish Theological Seminary  
**Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim** | Goldsmiths, University of London  
**Hannah E. Zaves-Greene** | Sarah Lawrence College  
**Wendy Zierler** | Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion





Galeet Dardashti

**Katz Center Turns 30!**

The Katz Center celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in April of 2024 with a concert featuring 2000–01 fellow Anna Shternshis and 2023–24 fellow Galeet Dardashti. Shternshis reconstructed Yiddish music from an archive thought destroyed by Stalin. Dardashti reimagined liturgical songs sung by her grandfather, acclaimed Iranian classical vocalist Younes Dardashti. The program was a moving tribute to Jewish musical culture.



Anna Shternshis



**Looking Back: 2023–2024:**

**The Sound and Music of Jewish Life**

During the 2023–24 fellowship year, the Katz Center turned its attention to the study of sound, music, and aurality in Jewish life, past and present. Fellows developed new research into the study of various musical cultures that have developed in Jewish contexts and explored the role of sound in Jewish life and culture.

**2023–2024 Fellows**

- Paula Ansaldo** | Harvard University
- Emma M. Brodeur** | University of Rochester
- Mary Channen Caldwell** | University of Pennsylvania
- Oren Cohen Roman** | University of Haifa
- Naomi Cohn Zantner** | Bar Ilan University
- Samantha M. Cooper** | Harvard University
- Galeet Dardashti** | New York University
- Uri Erman** | Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- Hadar Feldman Samet** | Tel Aviv University
- Gila Flam** | The National Library of Jerusalem
- Katherina Galor** | Brown University
- Kay Kaufman Shelemay** | Harvard University
- Mark Kligman** | University of California, Los Angeles
- Jeremiah Lockwood** | Yale Institute of Sacred Music
- Michael Lukin** | Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Jessica Roda** | Georgetown University
- Edwin Seroussi** | Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Yonatan Turgeman** | Hebrew University of Jerusalem



**Looking Back: 2022–2023:**

**Jews and Modern Legal Culture**

During the 2022–23 fellowship year, the

Katz Center turned its attention to the study of law between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries, an age of transition from a world of empires to the modern age of the nation-state and international law. Fellows developed new research in the study of Jews and the law across disciplinary perspectives, a focus that included Jewish law as it has developed in modern contexts as well as the role of Jews within other legal cultures.

**2022–2023 Fellows**

- Itamar Ben Ami** | Humboldt University of Berlin
- Sigal Ben-Porath** | University of Pennsylvania
- Leora Bilsky** | Tel Aviv University
- Emmanuel Bloch** | UC Berkeley School of Law
- Yonatan Y. Brafman** | Tufts University
- Julie Cooper** | Tel Aviv University
- Carolyn J. Dean** | Yale University
- Noëmie Duhaut** | Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz
- Ayala Fader** | Fordham University
- Marc Flandreau** | University of Pennsylvania
- Elisabeth Gallas** | Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow
- Nan Goodman** | University of Colorado
- Tafat Hacohen-Bick** | Ben Gurion University of the Negev
- Dana Hollander** | McMaster University
- Tamir Karkason** | Martin Luther University of Halle – Wittenberg
- Jessica Marglin** | University of Southern California
- Thomas Prendergast** | Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Chaim Saiman** | Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law
- Nomi Stolzenberg** | University of Southern California Gould School of Law
- Elly Teman** | Ruppin Academic Center, Israel
- Avishalom Westreich** | College of Law and Business, Israel
- Sarah Zager** | St. Olaf College



# KEDMA: Penn's Journal on Jewish Thought, Jewish Culture, and Israel

Kedma is a forum for innovative thinking about Jewish culture and arts, and diverse Jewish communities and trends in the United States, Israel, and around the world. Kedma hopes to encourage intellectually rigorous and varied conversation on campus and beyond.

Series II, Volume Number VI,  
Fall 2022

**Samuel Finkelstein, C'25, and Harry Kilberg, C'25**  
**Issue 2, Number 6: Fall 2022**

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**Issues of Kedma are online at:**

<https://repository.upenn.edu/kedma/>



# Courses

## Fall 2023

JWST 0012 Jews & China: Views from Two Perspectives  
JWST 0020 Religions of the West  
JWST 0100 Elementary Modern Hebrew I  
JWST 0150 Elementary Biblical Hebrew I  
JWST 0160 Beginning Yiddish I  
JWST 0200 Elementary Modern Hebrew II  
JWST 0300 Intermediate Modern Hebrew III  
JWST 0303 Introduction to the Bible  
JWST 0305 Great Books of Judaism: The Medieval Bookshelf  
JWST 0320 Modern Hebrew Literature & Culture in Translation  
JWST 0335 Jewish Humor  
JWST 0350 Intermediate Biblical Hebrew I  
JWST 0360 Intermediate Yiddish I  
JWST 0400 Intermediate Modern Hebrew IV  
JWST 1100 Women in Jewish Literature  
JWST 1130 How to Read the Bible  
JWST 1310 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented  
JWST 1362 Making of Modern Israel and Palestine  
JWST1400 Making of Scripture  
JWST 1600 Jews and Judaism in Antiquity  
JWST 2080 Representations of the Holocaust  
JWST 2206 Neighbors and Strangers: Jews and Christians in Premodern Europe  
JWST 4305 Spirit and Law  
JWST 5800 Walter Benjamin  
JWST 5810 Theories of Autobiography and Forms and Purposes of Italian Autobiographies in the 20th C.

## Spring 2024

JWST 0014 Jerusalem: Holy City  
JWST 0100 Elementary Modern Hebrew I  
JWST 0130 Studies in Ladino  
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JWST 0260 Beginning Yiddish II  
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JWST 0330 Jewish Political Thought & Action  
JWST 0400 Intermediate Modern Hebrew IV  
JWST 0450 Intermediate Biblical Hebrew II  
JWST 0460 Intermediate Yiddish II  
JWST 1000 Contemporary Israeli Culture  
JWST 1610 Medieval & Early Modern Jewry  
JWST 1711 Remembering the Holocaust  
JWST 5770 Inside the Archives

## Languages

The **Modern Hebrew Language Program** offers five semesters of coursework in Hebrew, stressing cultural and communicative competence. Our language sequence covers four levels, followed by a fifth-semester content course taught in Hebrew. Program faculty have been pioneers in developing web-based instructional materials, which are used for Hebrew instruction at a growing number of institutions throughout North America as well as in Latin America, Europe, and even Israel. Our classes, website, and social-media presence all serve as a portal to contemporary Israeli society and culture. In addition to our general curriculum, students interested in business, economics, medicine, and engineering have the opportunity to acquire specialized knowledge in their field of study, tailored to their respective language level. Our Modern Hebrew courses are dynamic, interactive, fun, and are deeply rooted in Israeli culture and society.

The **Yiddish Language Program** offers four semesters of coursework in Yiddish language to develop students' skills in communication, comprehension, reading, and expression, both oral and written. Kathryn Hellerstein and Alexander Botwinik integrate cultural materials, including songs, literature, journalism, film, theater, and digital resources into the curriculum. A fifth semester course, taught in Yiddish, lets students apply and hone their skills by reading, writing, listening, and speaking about Yiddish literature and culture. Yiddish language study is supplemented by courses that include Yiddish literature and culture in translation.

Penn offers a four-semester sequence of **Biblical Hebrew**. Elementary Biblical Hebrew 1 and 2 guide students through a textbook that teaches the fundamentals. Intermediate Biblical Hebrew 1 and 2 change the focus to literature; students learn grammatical skills by immersion in biblical prose and poetry.

The Jewish Studies Program offers a course in **Ladino**, also known as Judeo-Spanish. Taught by visiting lecturer Daisy Braverman, this course broadens Penn's instruction in Jewish languages and links our Program to Penn's Language Center.



# Penn Arts & Sciences Jewish Studies Program

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*Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania* appears annually.

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TO THANK THE  
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PEOPLE FOR THEIR  
GENERIOUS GIFTS  
AND DONATIONS  
TO THE JEWISH  
STUDIES  
PROGRAM DURING  
THE PAST  
ACADEMIC YEAR.**

## July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Anonymous (2)  
Michael S. Alexander, C'92  
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Marc E. Bernstein, parent  
Alan T. Blank, C'06  
Ken Y. Chen, ENG'05  
Susan J. Contess, C'15  
Elan M. Daniels, C'01  
Prof. Janet Falk-Kessler, OT'74  
Kevin Field  
Robin Frey, CW'75, GED'76  
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Shari Guggenhime, parent  
Niki Kanodia, C'02, L'05  
Ross Keenholtz  
Suzanne Berman Keenholtz, NU'07  
Daniel S. Lippman, C'16  
Ann Marchette, In memory of Saul Nathan  
Jonathan L. Marks, parent  
Stephanie Perl Marks, W'90, parent  
Jennifer Rosen Nosenchuk, W'97  
Joshua G. Perelman, C'93  
Stacey Kossow Perelman, W'92  
Joanna Mesh Rice, W'03  
Jason G. Rostovsky, W'16  
Deborah Ann Starr, C'90  
Richard E. Stat, WG'72

### Front cover image:

The first cookbook printed in Judeo-German, published in Budapest in 1854; designed to be an "indispensable handbook for Jewish women and daughters." Purchased thanks to the support of the following endowed Judaica library funds: Barney and Eleanor Frommer Memorial Fund; Gershwind/Bennett Endowed Fund for Judaica Collections; Sylvia R. and Lawrence N. Margolies Endowed Judaica Fund; Wood: Albert J. and Ele Wood Endowment Judaica Fund; Mark S. Zucker Endowed Judaica Fund.