

INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL  
AND JEWISH STUDIES  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

617 Kent Hall, 1140 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10027

LEARN. EXPLORE.  
IMMERSE YOURSELF  
IN ISRAEL &  
JEWISH STUDIES.

The Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies is Columbia University's center for the academic study and discussion of Jewish life, history, and culture. **Explore the length, breadth, and diversity of the Jewish experience with IJJS.**

Visit [ijjs.columbia.edu](https://ijjs.columbia.edu) for more information.  
P: 212-854-2581 | E: [ijjs@columbia.edu](mailto:ijjs@columbia.edu)

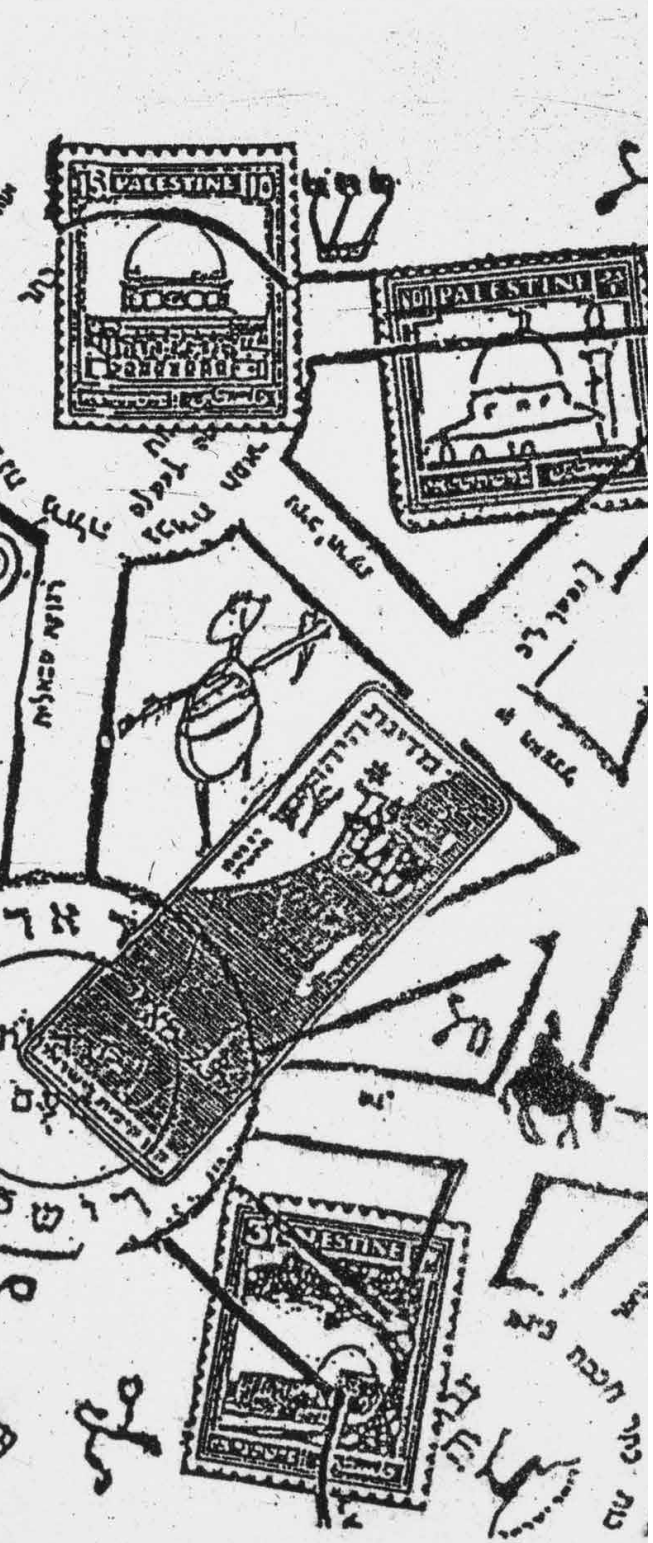


WINTER  
2019

INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH STUDIES  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



# A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Art: *The Letters of Gershom Scholem*, Mark Podwal

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report that the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies at Columbia University is flourishing on many fronts. IIJS is brimming with activity, from lunchtime lectures featuring notable scholars, to lively debate among our faculty, and students joining us for intimate dialogue with renowned experts in their field. If you haven't visited, come see our beautiful space at the top of Kent Hall. We thank artist Mark Podwal for adding color and warmth to our space by graciously arranging for a selection of his prints to be displayed on our walls. Beyond our physical space, IIJS' impact can be felt around the Morningside campus.

The role of an Institute within a University is to foster intellectual conversation that transcends departmental and disciplinary lines. This is precisely the aim of all our activities. Large and diverse institutions, with all their intellectual resources, can often feel alienating or cold. Our goals are to foster intellectual community, first and foremost for our students and faculty, to build bridges to other entities on and beyond our campus, and to embrace the larger community around us. At IIJS, we do this by focusing on our students and their scholarship.

- Our undergraduate students flock to classes to study Hebrew and Yiddish language and literatures, Jewish History, Religious Studies, the Middle East, and Jewish Thought, in courses that range from antiquity to contemporary issues.
- Some two dozen graduate students in various departments convene for mutual support and intellectual community under the guidance of Yiddish Dr. Agi Legutko. The M.A. in Jewish Studies program, started in 2014, has been attracting students of high caliber from many corners of the US and the around the world, due in no small part to the caring oversight of Dr. Yitzhak Lewis.

Our Institute is also very fortunate to benefit from the Judaica collection at Columbia, the second largest collection of Hebrew and Jewish language manuscripts in the Americas. Our ever knowledgeable Norman E. Alexander Librarian of Jewish Studies, Michelle Chesner, supports the work of students, faculty, and researchers the world over. This past semester I had the pleasure of co-teaching a graduate seminar on the history of the Jewish book, with Michelle, in the Rare Book and Manuscripts division of Butler Library. The riches that we discover in each session are beyond compare. One student told our colleague—"I wish this course would never end."

Please continue to show that you care about a flourishing Jewish intellectual life at Columbia: attend our events, drop us a line, and support our students and the Institute as generously as possible.

Sincerely,

**Elisheva Carlebach**

Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society

Cover: Photos of students taking part in *The Jewish Book in the Early Modern World* class.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 / *Summer Fellowships*

07 / *Fall 2018 Highlights*

09 / *Public Program Highlights*

11 / *Graduate Student News*

13 / *From the Stacks*

15 / *Faculty News*

17 / *Spring 2019 Highlights*

19 / *The Naomi Prawer Kadar Annual Memorial Lecture*

21 / *Core Faculty Listing*

22 / *Thank You*



# LOOKING BACK ON SUMMER 2018

This past summer, undergraduates and graduate students explored the depth and breadth of Jewish culture, literature, and history with support from the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies.

*Thanks to the generosity of our donors, students were able to take part in unique immersive educational experiences, present papers at conferences, and partake in valuable research that serves their own scholarship and the field of Jewish Studies.*

## NAOMI PRAWER KADAR FELLOWSHIP

Thanks to the generous funding from the Naomi Foundation, the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, together with the Department of Germanic Languages, ran a successful second year of the Naomi Fellowship, offered to Columbia University and Barnard College Yiddish students in the summer of 2018. The five Naomi Fellows completed the first part of the program, the Naomi Prawer Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University, and arrived in Poland for the second part of the program: a week-long study trip – “Exploring Yiddishland” – led by Prof. Agi Legutko. (Read more about Agi on page 16.)

The “Exploring Yiddishland” study trip focused on some of the key sites of Yiddishland, the borderless space once centered in Poland, where Yiddish culture flourished for centuries: Krakow, Lublin, Zamosc, Chelm, and Warsaw. The experience involved learning about the Yiddish history of each place but also on connecting with the Yiddish present. In each of the cities, students encountered the contemporary Yiddish scene – meeting with Polish Yiddishists and researchers who engage in Yiddish scholarship. The essay below is one student’s reflection on this experience.



## ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER IN LUBLIN

By Pamela Brenner

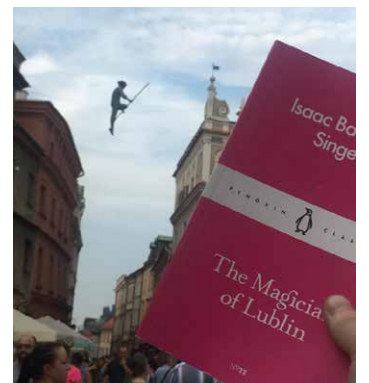


When our journey first began in Krakow, Prof. Agi Legutko bought a copy of Bashevis’ *The Magician of Lublin* in the Galicia Museum. Asking us who wants to read it first, I immediately responded, eager to finish as much as I could before our arrival in Lublin. Growing up, Bashevis was a household name, as he lived a few blocks from where my mother grew up, and my grandparents traveled with him to Sweden to accept the Nobel Prize in 1978. But while our bookshelves were stocked with his short stories and novels, the only story I could remember reading was *Mayse Tishevits* (A Tale from Tishevits) for a college course. And thus, I began to read Bashevis in Krakow. By the time we

arrived in Lublin, I had only gotten through 30 pages, but was already hooked. Immersed in the world of nineteenth-century Poland, I could envision the interactions between Yasha Mazur, the tightrope-walking Jewish protagonist, and his Jewish and non-Jewish friends and lovers. For Yasha, each home provided a new opportunity for love, adventure and escape. While he was torn between his Jewish identity and the opportunities available if he abandoned his faith, Yasha’s tension arose because of the multicultural context in which he found himself. *The Magician of Lublin* paints a picture of a world that was written after it was already destroyed.

Even though the Jewish Lublin exists no longer, remnants of its Jewish past are being brought to life in innovative ways. Walking into the town square, the first thing that caught my eye was a tightrope with a statue of a tightrope walker balancing over the buildings. But while that tribute to Yasha Mazur is ever-present, right next to the statue was a real tightrope walker! We had come just in time to catch the end of the Carnival of Magicians in Lublin, an exciting time for the town. Overpopulated with visitors, each nook and cranny was filled with magicians, performers, and spectators. After oohing and aahing at some of the performances, we met with Witek Dabrowski, director of the Retracing I.B. Singer Festival. Inspired by Bashevis’ stories that take place in 30 towns across Poland, Witek established the Festival Śladami Singera, as it’s known in Polish, to return some of the magic to the settings of those stories. The festival provides an opportunity for Poles to learn about the history of their towns, explore the world of pre-Holocaust Jewish Poland, and enjoy performances by world-class artists. Witek is not alone in his mission; he works for the Brama Grodzka (Grodzka Gate) Project, a cultural center in Lublin tasked with preserving the memory of the town’s 45,000 Jewish residents prior to World War II. Under the auspices of Tomasz Pietrasiewicz, the Project is located on the site of the historic gate that divided the Christian and Jewish quarters of the city, representing a multicultural meeting point. In addition to documenting the history of Jewish Lublin and its demise, the group, also known as the NN Theatre, puts on performances of Jewish stories in Polish. Entirely run by Poles, the Brama Grodzka represents the fact that there are no Jews left in Lublin to tell their own stories. Tomasz and Witek, inspired by Singer’s portrayal of a multicultural Poland, are doing wonders to restore, in whatever ways possible, the memory of a community in which Jews and Poles lived side-by-side. Bashevis, who was adamant about writing solely in Yiddish, and sharply focused on depicting Jewish Poland, could not have imagined the impact that his works would have on Poles who see his tales as part of their own national history. Now a symbol of the possibility of multicultural unity, Yasha Mazur and the worlds in which he lived provides an opening for Jews and Poles to connect with each other and rebuild with love a world that was destroyed through hate. As long as people like Tomasz and Witek continue working to interweave Jewish and Polish history and culture, I can hope for a brighter future.

*Pamela Brenner, a Manhattan native, is a Yiddish Studies major at Barnard College. She is a YIVO Research Fellow and serves as president of the Yiddish Club of Columbia/Barnard Hillel. In addition to her academic interests, Pamela is involved in various Torah study initiatives. She is an alumna of the Migdal Oz Beit Midrash for Women.*





# UNDERGRADUATE ISRAEL FELLOWSHIP

In the Summer of 2018, 29 students took part in the IIJS Undergraduate Israel Fellowship. As part of the Fellowship, students take part in pre-professional and academic programs and learning opportunities coordinated by the Institute in Israel and return to campus and take part in informal learning opportunities that range from film screenings to close encounters with renowned scholars. In addition, students create a community of learners engaged in Israel Studies.



**NOAH**  
*Columbia College*

"I worked for a Biblical Studies professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I was assisting him with his project, editing the standard New Jewish Publication Society's translation of the Pentateuch in order to reflect his critical source splitting of the text. I became more interested in Pentateuchal studies and source criticism and would be interested in pursuing this field in the future."

**SHIRA**  
*School of General Studies/Jewish Theological Seminary*

"I was an intern at the Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Institute's Documentations Center for North African Jewry During WWII. At the Institute I did research on Jewish life in North Africa during the war... My experience at Ben Zvi enabled me to learn an incredible amount about the topic of Jews in North Africa and the Middle East and reaffirmed my desire to enter this field in the future. Additionally, I made great connections with the staff at the Institute and look forward to being in touch with them in the future."

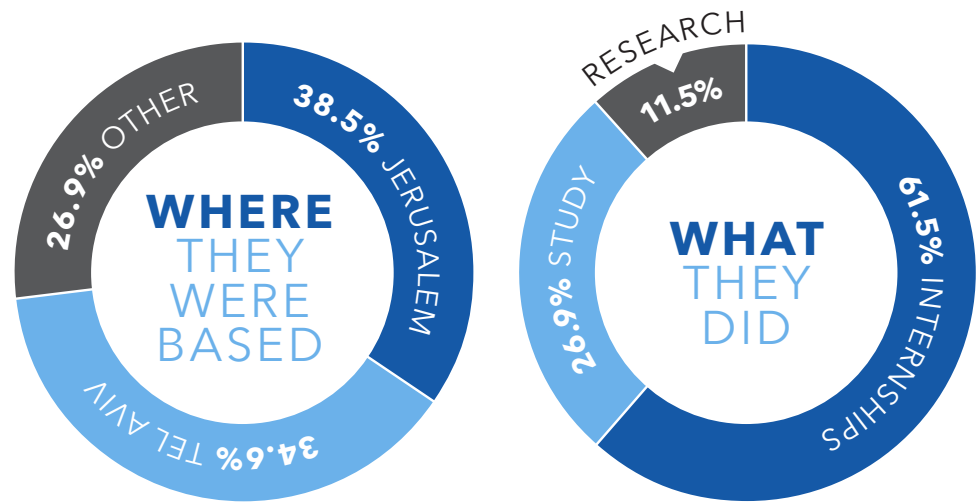
**RACHEL**  
*School of General Studies/Jewish Theological Seminary*

"I took a class at Tel Aviv University on the history of Tel Aviv. The course introduced many new historical perspectives regarding the founding on Tel Aviv and its evolution over the past 100 years. Through the course I explored the refugee community in Israel and ended up interning at the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC)."

**SHOSHANA**  
*School of General Studies/Jewish Theological Seminary*

"This summer, I was a research assistant at the Insect Ecology Lab at Hebrew University's campus in Rehovot. This summer and my time at this lab have solidified my desire to continue working in labs, with the eventual goal of doing my own research. My time here has given me a greater understanding and insight into what entomology research involves, which is important to me because I am considering graduate studies in entomology."

## 2018 Fellows by the numbers: 195 IIJS Undergraduate Israel Fellows since 2010



## Educational Programs in Israel

- > Gershom Gorenberg on Israeli settlements
- > Screening of *In Her Footsteps* with Director Rana Abu-Fraiha
- > Asaf Zamir on local Tel Aviv municipality
- > African Refugee Development Center Tel Aviv walking tour
- > Rabbi Aaron Leibowitz on "Hashgacha Pratit" (*Alternative Kosher Supervision Project*)
- > Jerusalem Grafitti Tour



## Student experiences:

I interned and conducted research for the Abba Eban Institute for International Diplomacy headed by Ambassador Ron Prosor.

I gained a better understanding of the Israeli startup ecosystem and entrepreneurship in Israel.

Internship with Itach Maakei Women Lawyers for Social Justice... I worked on comparative research projects about Gender Mainstreaming and Sexual Assault in the healthcare system.

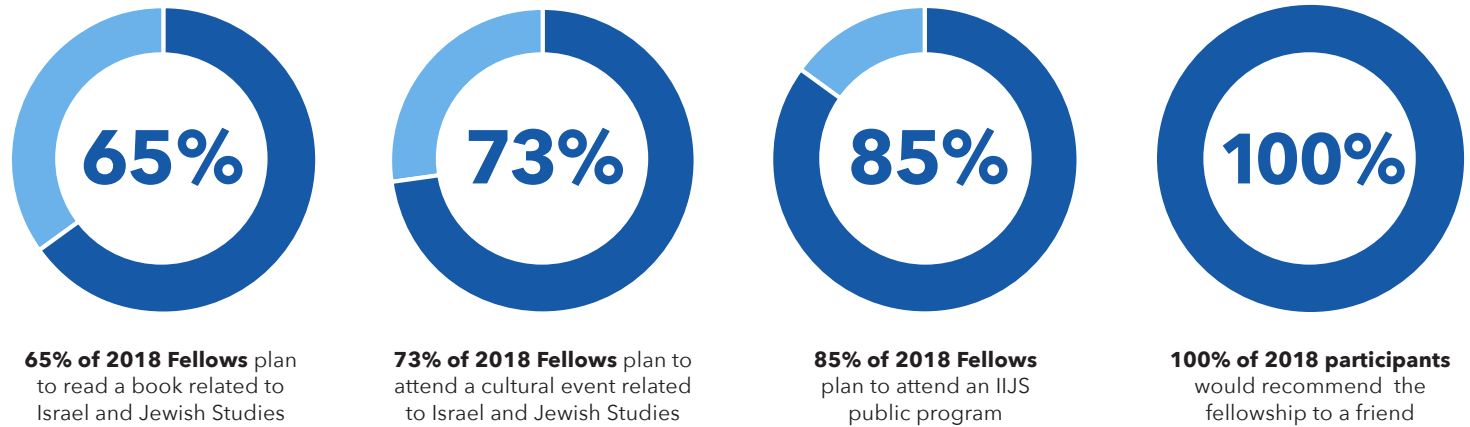
I was a student at Hebrew University's Rothberg Summer Program, where I took the Intensive Arabic Course.

I worked as an Analyst at Cukierman & Co. Investment House and Yafo Capital, where I conducted research of the Israeli AI Industry.

I interned at a startup called GoWith, based in the startup accelerator in the Azrieli College of Engineering.



## As a result of the fellowship...



## Thank you from the Fellows

I'm really glad this fellowship exists and I'm so glad I got to take part in it! Thank you!

I really had a great summer! Thank you for helping to make it possible.



## JEWISH STUDIES CLASSES SAMPLER

- HUMOR IN JEWISH LITERATURE
- IMMIGRANT NEW YORK
- ISRAELI SOCIETY AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT
- JEWS IN THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE, 300-600 CE
- THE JEWISH BOOK IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD
- JEWISH MUSIC OF NEW YORK



## GETTING TO KNOW... DANIEL HERSKOWITZ

**Dr. Daniel Herskowitz** is joining IJS for the 2018-19 academic year as the Rabin-Shvidler Postdoctoral Fellow. Herskowitz recently graduated from the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford in 2018 and completed his dissertation, titled *Which God will Save Us? Jewish Receptions of Martin Heidegger's Philosophy*. His articles have been published or accepted for publication in various peer-reviewed journals, including *Modern Theology*, *Journal of Religion*, *New German Critique*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, *AJS Review*, and *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*.

01

### *How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?*

I guess I was always interested in 'Jewish studies', from Tanakh and Talmud to Jewish history, philosophy, and literature. It took me a while to get into 'Jewish studies' academically, though. My BA and MA degrees were in history and philosophy, but my master's thesis, while written in the philosophy department, was finally dedicated to a 'Jewish' topic. My dissertation, written in the department of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford, was on Jewish receptions of Martin Heidegger's philosophy.

02

### *You taught a class this Fall called "Heidegger and the Jews". Is there a fact or something surprising that people may not know about this topic?*

I think that often, what people may know about the German philosopher Martin Heidegger is that he was a Nazi. That is of course - sadly - true. But I think it is interesting that one can make a good case for the claim that he was also the single most influential philosophical figure on 20th century European Jewish thought. It's pretty striking how so many central Jewish thinkers thought that this philosopher, who is not only challenging philosophically, but also morally, had to be confronted and grappled with in a serious manner. Maybe another surprising thing that people may not know is that Heidegger studied Hebrew when he was a young student. I actually discovered the letter where he admits that he used to know the language but has forgotten it since.

03

### *What are you currently researching?*

I'm currently writing a little more on Heidegger and Jewish thought and then will start looking into my next research project: the philosophical, theological, and political horizons of a number of modern appropriations of Maimonides. I want to explore how the Rambam was portrayed and utilized in modern contexts, despite structural differences between Aristotelian and post-Kantian thinking.

04

### *What are you most looking forward to teaching in your Spring course?*

I'm looking forward to teaching an introductory seminar on modern Jewish thought, from Spinoza to Levinas and feminist theology. It'll be great to read all these classical texts again and try to think about them in a fresh way.

05

### *You're hosting a dinner party – who would you invite from any point in history?*

Well, probably my great-grandchildren or something like that.



# PUBLIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

10.17

*Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History* with Steven J. Zipperstein

10.29

*Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-century America* with Shari Rabin

11.12

Screening of *Azimuth* followed by Q & A with Dir. Mike Burstyn

11.29

Salo Baron New Voices in Jewish Studies: *A Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Family: Challenging Stereotypes* with Liat Maggid-Alon



From upper left corner to clockwise: Rebecca Kobrin, Ilana Blumberg and Ari Goldman; Mike Burstyn with students; Steven J. Zipperstein and Jeremy Dauber; Shari Rabin

## MIRON LECTURE ON JEWISH LITERATURE WITH CHANA KRONFELD

*Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley*

On Monday, October 8, IJJS held the inaugural Miron Lecture on Jewish Literature. It was an incredibly special evening where we celebrated the career of the recently-retired Prof. Dan Miron and the scholarship of Prof. Chana Kronfeld in the field of Hebrew Literature. A sold-out audience ranging from the public to professors and students, had the opportunity to hear from Kronfeld on her latest investigation into *The Land as Woman: The Afterlife of a Poetic Metaphor in Women's Modern Hebrew Poetry*. Kronfeld explored this metaphor from Biblical to Prophetic literature and into the present with poetry by Esther Raab, Yona Wallach, Adi Keissar and others. The following day, Kronfeld led a group of graduate students in a workshop entitled *Queering Gender in Modern Hebrew Poetry*. A special thank you to the Knapp Family Foundation for its support of this program.



NOA TSAUSHU

*Second Year Ph.D. Student, Germanics*

"I wanted to put in writing how wonderful of an experience it was to have Chana Kronfeld here for both a lecture and a workshop. I've been following her work for years and I am always amazed by her sharp analytic skills, original ideas and passion for Jewish literature. Her visit provided an intimate insight to all these and more and allowed us to connect in an informal and friendly manner... During the workshop we got a taste of her new book (in progress) and I am grateful for the IJJS for allowing us to keep up with the forefront of scholarship in the field of Jewish Studies."





# GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

## EREZ DEGOLAN

**Erez DeGolan** is a third year Ph.D. student in Religion, with a concentration in classical rabbinic literature and late antique Mediterranean history. He was recently named the Morton Smith Fellow for 2018-19 through Columbia University's History Department. With support from IIJS, DeGolan presented a paper at the Oxford Symposium for Religious Studies and was selected to present work at the 2018 American Academy for Jewish Research's Graduate Student Seminar. DeGolan recently published a book review and an essay on the *Ancient Jew Review* website.

## MIRIAM SCHULZ

**Miriam Schulz** is a fifth year Ph.D. Candidate in Yiddish Studies. Schultz was awarded the 2018-2019 Harriman PepsiCo Fellowship and the 2017 Scholarship Award for Ph.D. Students by the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yad Vashem. Her article "'Before the bow that was drawn': The Vilnius Komitet and its documentation of the destruction of Polish Jewry, 1939-1940/41" was published in *In geveb. A Journal of Yiddish Studies*. In addition, Schultz presented the paper "'A maran... Hofshiteyn iz a maran...': Polish Jewish Refugee Intellectuals and the Birth of Soviet Marranos" at the international workshop "Deported, Exiled, Saved: History and Memory of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union (1940-1959)" at POLIN Museum in Warsaw, her paper "Bind Up (and Digitize) the Message: Polish-Jewish Refugees and the Vilna Committee, 1939-1940" at the workshop "Exploring Refugee Data" organized by EHRI/Masaryk Institute Workshop in Prague, and "The Holocaust and Yiddish" at the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Birkbeck, University of London.

## ALEKSANDRA JAKUBCZAK

**Aleksandra Jakubczak** is a second year Ph.D. student of Jewish History based in the History Department. With support from IIJS, she participated in a May 2018 workshop for young scholars of Eastern European and Russian Jewry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Jakubczak presented a paper "Protecting the Jewish Daughters: Moral Panic and the Jewish Anti-Trafficking Campaign, 1880s-1914." In June 2018, she attended another workshop for young scholars of the history and culture of Polish Jewry organized by the Historical Society of Israel in Zichron Ya'akov, Israel. Her IIJS summer fellowship allowed her to conduct research in the National Library of Israel and the Central Archives for the History of Jewish People in Jerusalem. Currently, as an IIJS Bloom Fellow, she is working on her master's thesis "Protecting the Jewish Daughters: Migration, Trafficking, and the Fears of Jewish Women's Mobility, 1880s-1914" and gathering materials from New York's archives and libraries for her doctoral dissertation.

## ISHAI MISHORY

**Ishai Mishory** is a second year Ph.D. student and Teaching Fellow in the Department of Religion with a focus on Jewish Studies. In 2018, Mishory received a Summer Study/Research Travel Grant from IIJS that allowed him to conduct research in Venice. In addition, he is the recipient of the 2018-2019 Irene C. Fromer Fellowship in Jewish Studies at Columbia University.

## SANDRA CHIRITESCU

**Sandra Chiritescu** is a fifth year Ph.D. candidate in Yiddish Studies. She is currently a Fellow in Academic Administration at Columbia University Press. She recently published a book review on Friedrich Gorenstein's *Redemption* (Columbia University Press, 2018) in the *Forverts*. In addition, Chiritescu published translations of children's stories in *In the Land of Happy Tears* (Penguin Random House, 2018). This past summer with the support of IIJS, Chiritescu presented papers at various workshops including "Women's Chains and Liberation: Sonya, the agune, and Phyllis, the divorcee, in Blume Lempel's *Ballad of a Dream*" at the Oxford Summer Institute in Modern and Contemporary Judaism and "Third-generation Graphic Witnessing in Amy Kurzweil's *Flying Couch* and Julia Alekseyeva's *Soviet Daughter*" at the Leo Baeck Summer University on Jewish Studies and Gender Studies.

## NOA TSAUSHU

**Noa Tsaushu** is a second year Ph.D. student in Yiddish Studies in the Department of Germanic Languages. Her areas of study include Eastern-European Yiddish avant-garde groups, visual and material culture of the Yiddish avant-garde, and Yiddish modernism in Ukraine in the 1920's. Tsaushu recently presented "The Kultur-Lige Artist Studio: Jewish Art School in the Making, One Hundred Years of the Kultur-Lige" at the Ukrainian and Jewish Cultural Formation of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the recipient of the 2018 Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship, a semester-long research fellowship for students awarded on the basis of academic achievement and Yiddish language aptitude. In addition, she received a 2018 Summer Research Grant from IIJS.



# GETTING TO KNOW... JORDAN KATZ

**Jordan Katz** (CC '11, GSAS '16) is on the road to getting her Ph.D. under the direction of Prof. Elisheva Carlebach. As a Ph.D. candidate, Katz also serves as the IIJS University Seminar Rapporteur. In this role, she coordinates seminars by senior scholars for scholars. Jordan's academic pursuits have taken her to the Netherlands, Germany, and Israel to research the role of Jewish women in and out of domestic life in early modern Europe.

01

### How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

I attended Columbia as an undergraduate and took a class with Professor Carlebach. I fell in love with Jewish history, and it was an easy decision to come back to Columbia for graduate school.

02

### What are you currently researching?

I'm currently researching Jewish midwives in early modern Europe. That's what my dissertation is about.

03

### What books are you reading now?

*Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History* by Steven Zipperstein, *Lake Success* by Gary Shteyngart, and countless articles and books on early modern medical culture. I just finished Ken Krimstein's *The Three Escapes of Hannah Arendt: A Tyranny of Truth*, which is a graphic biography of Hannah Arendt. So good and so beautifully drawn.

04

### What are you most looking forward to this Spring?

I'm looking forward to completing an entire draft of my dissertation. Hopefully that will happen!

05

### You're hosting a dinner party – who would you invite from any point in history? And what would you serve?

Glikl of Hameln - I would love to interview her about her life. And I would serve her medlars (an apple-like fruit). She mentions these in her autobiography.





## FROM THE STACKS

By Michelle Chesner



Columbia has been collecting Judaica since its founding in 1754. Hebrew was taught at Columbia as one of the classical languages (along with Greek and Latin), and so even in its early days, Hebrew books were part of collecting priorities. The Columbia University Archives contains a copy of the Psalms in Hebrew and Latin that had been owned by Columbia founder, Samuel Johnson, and includes the Greek formula that Johnson would use for the Columbia Convocation in the 18th century.

Hebrew's prominence at Columbia during the early years is also evidenced by its ownership of the first book printed with Hebrew moveable type in the Americas: a Hebrew grammar printed by Judah Monis in Cambridge, MA, in 1735. A professor of Hebrew in the late 18th century at Columbia could not or would not use the book for his class; instead, Johann Kunze created his own grammar, and students created their own copies from his manuscript edition.

Of all of the colleges in the fledgling American colonies, King's College (renamed Columbia after the American Revolution to remove any vestige of the monarchy that had just been overthrown) was the only institution to subscribe to the important critical edition of the Hebrew Bible produced by Benjamin Kennicott of England. The only subscribers from the Western Hemisphere (all included under the larger heading for England) were the College itself and two fellows of "Kings College, New York." However, Columbia was involved in more than just purchasing the monumental volume. As is clear from a letter from Kennicott to then-president Myles Cooper, Columbia was also instrumental in bringing to England an important manuscript for Kennicott's use. The manuscript was owned by the Simson family, whose son Samson gave a Hebrew address at Columbia's Commencement in the year 1800, and they loaned the manuscript to Kennicott for his research. The courier was none other than Myles Cooper himself.

Jewish Studies flourished in many ways at Columbia in the following centuries, and the library continued to collect diverse materials relating to the Jewish experience. The rare Judaica collections presently span from the 10th to the 20th centuries, and globally from India to the Caribbean. The collections continue to grow thanks to the generosity of the Norman E. Alexander Foundation and other donors. Students are encouraged to utilize the materials in their research, and the books in the collection have been featured in many of the IJS' courses. This semester, a graduate seminar meets weekly in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library to discuss the history of the Jewish Book while turning the pages of centuries' old Jewish books. The library is very proud of its long history of Judaica collection and research support, and is dedicated to continuing this fine work well into the future.

*Michelle Chesner is the Norman E. Alexander Librarian for Jewish Studies.*

From upper left corner to clockwise: Johann Kunze, A Hebrew Grammar, New York, 1796. University Archives Columbiana Manuscripts Collection, Item 209; Johnson Psalter, Sepher Tehillim, i.e. Liber Psalmorum, 1685. University Archives Columbiana Manuscripts Collection, Box 13, Folder 8; 1773 February 23; University Archives Columbiana Manuscripts Collection, Box 3, Folder 35; Johnson Psalter, interior page.



# FACULTY NEWS

## BETH BERKOWITZ

**Beth Berkowitz's** book *Animals and Animality in the Babylonian Talmud*, was published in Spring 2018 by Cambridge University Press. She will be giving presentations this winter at the Association of Jewish Studies and at a conference on Animals in Antiquity at Brown University. Berkowitz will be presenting a Faculty Book Talk at IJJS in April 2019.

## TINA FRÜHAUF

**Tina Frühauf** recently published *Experiencing Jewish Music in America: A Listener's Companion*.

## YINON COHEN

**Yinon Cohen** published a number of articles including "Israel's Biospatial Politics: Territory, Demography, and Effective Control" in Public Culture along with Neve Gordon; and "Ethnic origin and identity in the Jewish population of Israel" in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, along with Noah Lewin Epstein.

## NAAMA HAREL

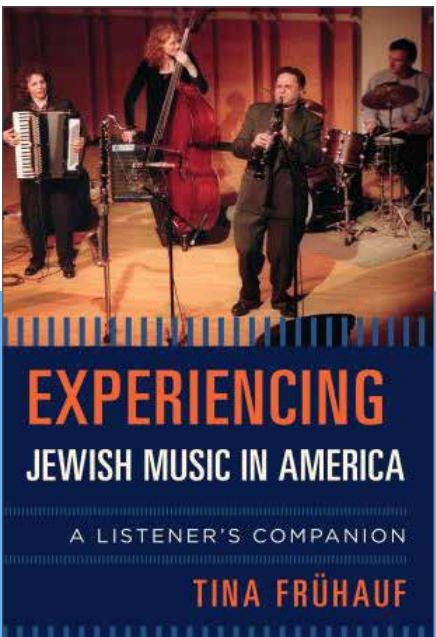
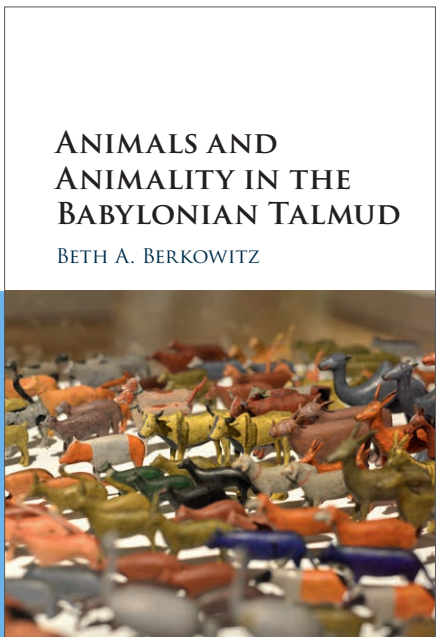
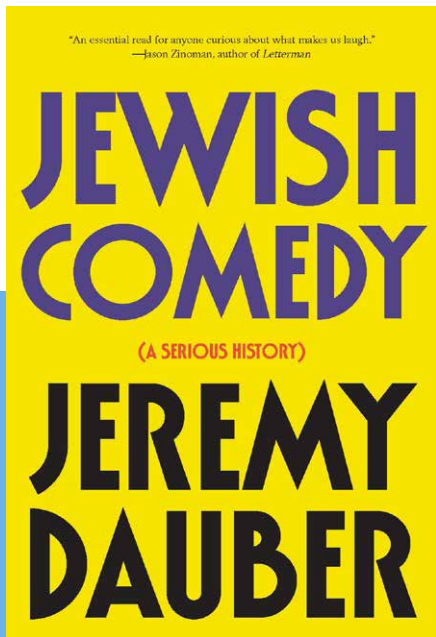
**Naama Harel's** forthcoming article "Of Cows and Women: The Animalization of Victimized Women in Devorah Baron's Fiction" will be published in *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*.

## JEREMY DAUBER

**Jeremy Dauber's** book *Jewish Comedy: A Serious History*, is out in paperback.

## REBECCA KOBRIN

**Rebecca Kobrin** published op-eds on CNN.com, WashingtonPost.com and *The Guardian* in response to the tragedy in Pittsburgh.



# GETTING TO KNOW... AGI LEGUTKO



**Dr. Agnieszka Legutko** is a lecturer in Yiddish and the Director of the Yiddish Language Program in the Department of Germanic Languages.

## 01 | How did you get involved with Yiddish Studies?

It's a long story but I'll make it short: I wanted to read Isaac Bashevis Singer in the original. I first read his works in the Polish translation and was captivated with his writing. I started learning Yiddish at the university – my family stopped speaking Yiddish before the First World War – and I was surprised to realize that Yiddish contained many Polish words. According to I.B. Singer's copyright, his works can be translated into other languages only from the English translations, which he called "second originals." So the Polish words made an interesting journey in case of Bashevis' works: from Polish to Yiddish, from Yiddish to English, and then from English back to Polish. I wanted to explore this phenomenon more deeply. At the time, I was getting a double degree in English Language and Literature and Translation Studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, so I wrote my master thesis on one of Bashevis' stories, "The Last Demon." I argued that translation is a cross-cultural event and that Bashevis is in fact untranslatable, even though he got the Nobel Prize for his works in translation.

This adventure with Bashevis, who is still my beloved Yiddish writer, made me realize that there is an entire world of Yiddish literature and culture that awaits explorers, researchers, and translators. Only about five percent of Yiddish literary works have been translated into other languages. So I decided to continue with my Yiddish studies. I consider myself very lucky: not only was I able to get my Ph.D. from Columbia University – which houses the oldest Yiddish Studies Program in the United States – but I am now also the head of the Yiddish Language Program here at Columbia, where I teach Yiddish language and literature. I am thus fulfilling my life mission: to advance Yiddish studies and share my passion for Yiddish literature and culture with Columbia students.

## 02 | What are you currently researching?

I am currently completing my first academic book, which explores the motif of the dybbuk possession (a wandering soul that possesses a living body) in modern Jewish cultures. I was fascinated by the ongoing obsession with a Yiddish play by S. An-sky, *The Dybbuk, Or Between Two Worlds* (1914). There have been over a hundred (and counting) Dybbuk-related theater and film productions and adaptations created since the play's world premiere in 1920. *The Dybbuk*, which in a nutshell is a Jewish *Romeo and Juliet* with *The Exorcist* twist, is arguably the most famous and most often performed play in Yiddish/Jewish theater, and has in fact become a classic of world literature.

The questions that became a driving force behind my project included: Why are we still talking about dybbuks in the twenty-first century? What is so poignant in this premodern, irrational motif that speaks to so many in the age of postmodernism and secularization? In my book, *Possessed by the Past: The Afterlife of the Dybbuk in Modern Jewish Cultural Imaginaries*, I examine the evolution of the dybbuk in prewar classics, Holocaust narratives, feminist fiction as well as in theater and film productions created in Yiddish, English, Hebrew, French, and Polish, using gender, trauma, memory, and performance as analytical categories. This has been a very dear project to me and I look forward for the book to being out in the world.

## 03 | What books are you reading now?

I'm actually rereading Bashevis in the original Yiddish now. I'm teaching an Advanced Yiddish II class this semester, and it's a dream come true to read Bashevis together with a group of ten passionate students dedicated to Yiddish. My shelf is piled up with many wonderful recently published studies, such as Vivi Lachs' *Whitechapel Noise: Jewish Immigrant Life in Yiddish Song and Verse, London 1884-1914*, Suzanne Schneider's *Mandatory Separation: Religion, Education, and Mass Politics in Palestine*, and Shachar Pinsker's *A Rich Brew: How Cafés Created Modern Jewish Culture*. Suzanne and Vivi recently gave fantastic book talks for the Columbia community and it's great to continue the conversation by reading their works.

## 04 | What are some highlights from the recent semesters?

There are quite a few! Firstly, thanks to a very generous support from the Naomi Foundation and the Irene Kronhill Pletka Foundation, we are very happy to be able to offer two fellowships for students of Yiddish at Columbia. The Naomi Fellowship, a Yiddish Study Abroad project, offers scholarships for Columbia student participation in the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University, followed by a week-long study trip to Eastern Europe, which I organize and run. The recently launched Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Fellowship which entails 45 hours of archival work at YIVO offers the fellows an opportunity to explore Yiddish culture, while refining their research skills. The results of these recent developments are tangible: the fall enrollment in Yiddish language courses has increased over 150% since 2013, and we now have four declared majors and one concentrator in Yiddish studies, for the first time in many years! Secondly, I am beyond thrilled to see how students get involved with Yiddish. Two of my students, Pammy Brenner and Michal Novak, recently reactivated the Columbia/Barnard Hillel Yiddish Club and are actively promoting Yiddish on campus. This Fall, the student club organized a Yiddish kave-sho, conversation hour, in the sukkah, and held a Yiddish-speaking Shabbat dinner, which was attended by 30 students. I shep nakhes seeing their involvement! And finally, during our recent Yiddish event, Vivi Lachs' book talk, a newly-wed Yiddish-speaking couple, (the bride is my former Yiddish student), told me that they first met during the Yiddish kave-sho I run monthly at Columbia. It seems I may add another skill to my resume – match-making!

## 05 | You're hosting a Yiddish dinner party – who would you invite from any point in history? And what would you serve?

What a great question! I'd definitely invite Celia Dropkin, an underestimated Yiddish poet who revolutionized Yiddish poetry with her bold explorations of gender, sexuality, and the body. Bold erotic motifs in Dropkin's poetry shocked her contemporaries, while her poems, written mostly in the 1920s and '30s, sound au courant in the twenty-first century. I'm writing an article about gender dynamics in her poetry and would love to get some face-to-face time with Dropkin. And if I could invite more guests, I'd love to hang out with Royzl Fishls, the first documented Yiddish woman writer, who wrote the preface and set to print a Yiddish translation of the Book of Psalms, in 1586, in my hometown of Krakow. In terms of food, I'd probably go for modern renditions of traditional Ashkenazi dishes, and for dessert, I'd make ricotta khremtslekh with plum jam. It's a typical Passover dish, but ever since I learned the recipe during a delightful Pesakh cooking workshop Irene Kronhill Pletka led for our Yiddish students last spring, it's been a favorite in my house.



# SPRING 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

## JEWISH STUDIES CLASSES SAMPLER

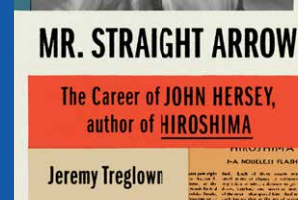
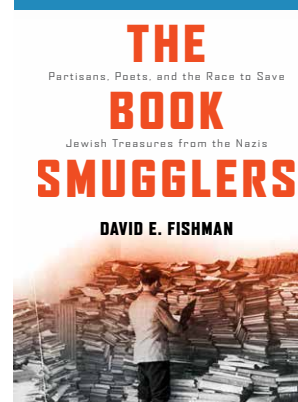
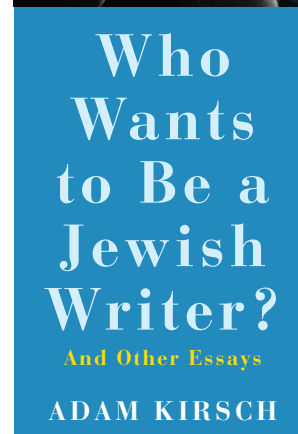
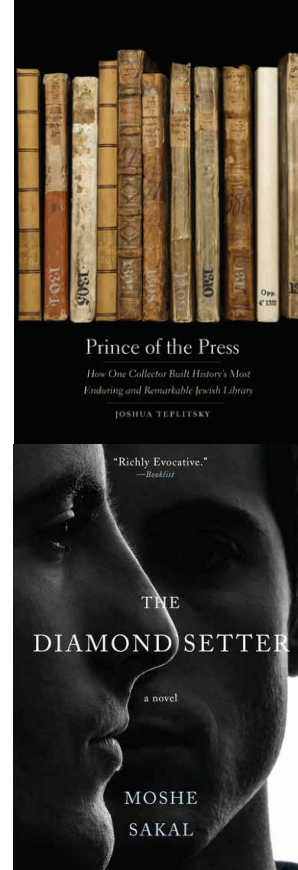
- INTRODUCTION TO MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT
- JOURNALIST AS A HISTORIAN
- MAGIC AND MONSTERS IN YIDDISH LITERATURE
- MEDIEVAL JEWISH CULTURES
- MODERN JEWISH INTELLECTUAL HISTORY
- MODERNISM, NATIONALISM, REVIVAL: READINGS IN MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE
- TOPICS IN ISRAELI CINEMA

### Programs Relating to Anti-Semitism

IIJS is partnering with various campus constituents to host a series of public programs, conferences, and courses that explore the history, literature, and language of anti-Semitism.

- A panel discussion with Teacher's College entitled *Anti-Semitism Today: Why Are Hate Crimes On The Rise In The US?*
- *The Holocaust in/and America* – a course taught by **Jeremy Dauber**
- A film screening of *Who Will Write Our History* followed by a conversation with **Samuel Kassow**
- A lecture on *Heidegger & the Jews* with **Daniel Herskowitz**
- A Book Talk with **David Fishman** on *Book Smugglers: Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis*
- An Anti-Semitism in the Americas conference
- A panel discussion with Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism entitled *Don't Panic, Don't Ignore: How to Report on Hate*

For more details, visit [iij.s.columbia.edu](http://iij.s.columbia.edu).



## FEBRUARY

- 06** *WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**BOOK TALK + LUNCH**  
PRINCE OF THE PRESS: HOW ONE COLLECTOR BUILT HISTORY'S MOST ENDURING AND REMARKABLE JEWISH LIBRARY WITH **JOSHUA TEPLITSKY**
- 13** *WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**LECTURE + LUNCH**  
HEIDEGGER AND THE JEWS - WHAT'S NEXT? WITH **DANIEL HERSKOWITZ**
- 18** *MONDAY @ 1:00 PM*  
**ISRAELI AUTHOR SERIES**  
THE DIAMOND SETTER WITH **MOSHE SAKAL**
- 20** *WEDNESDAY @ 7:00 PM*  
**FILM@IIJS**  
OUTDOORS
- 21** *THURSDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
IN DIALOGUE: POLISH JEWISH RELATIONS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR WITH **SAMUEL KASSOW** AND **PIOTR WRÓBEL**  
Co-sponsored by Fordham University's Jewish Studies program and YIVO
- 25** *MONDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**PERFORMANCE + BOOK TALK + LUNCH**  
EXPERIENCING JEWISH MUSIC IN AMERICA: A LISTENER'S COMPANION WITH **TINA FRÜHAUF**

## MARCH

- 04** *MONDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**LECTURE + LUNCH**  
LAW, SELFNESS, AND KINSHIP IN MEDIEVAL KARAISM WITH **JOSEPH E. DAVID**
- 07** *THURSDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**SALO BARON NEW VOICES IN JEWISH STUDIES LECTURE**  
DESIGNING WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS: THE FIRST YEARS WITH **NOAM SHOKED**
- 11** *MONDAY @ 7:00 PM*  
**FILM@IIJS**  
REDEMPTION
- 25** *MONDAY @ 7:00 PM*  
**BOOK TALK**  
WHO WANTS TO BE A JEWISH WRITER? AND OTHER ESSAYS WITH **ADAM KIRSCH**
- 28** *THURSDAY @ 7:30 PM*  
**PANEL DISCUSSION**  
DON'T PANIC, DON'T IGNORE: HOW TO REPORT ON HATE MODERATED BY **SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN**

ALL EVENTS ARE **FREE TO THE PUBLIC** & ADVANCED REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

PLEASE VISIT [IIJ.S.COLUMBIA.EDU](http://iij.s.columbia.edu) FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE EVENT INFORMATION.

INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH STUDIES  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## SPRING 2019 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

## APRIL

- 03** *WEDNESDAY @ 6:30 PM LIGHT RECEPTION; 7:30 PM LECTURE*  
**THE NAOMI PRAWER KADAR ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE**  
THE FIRST AMERICAN JEWISH WOMAN NOVELIST: UNCOVERING THE STORY OF CORA WILBURN AND HER JEWISH-SPIRITUALIST NOVEL, COSELLA WAYNE (1860) WITH **JONATHAN D. SARNA**
- 09** *TUESDAY @ 7:00 PM*  
**BOOK TALK**  
THE BOOK SMUGGLERS: PARTISANS, POETS, AND THE RACE TO SAVE JEWISH TREASURES FROM THE NAZIS WITH **DAVID E. FISHMAN**
- 11** *THURSDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**FACULTY AUTHOR SERIES**  
ANIMALS & ANIMALITY IN THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD WITH **BETH BERKOWITZ**
- 15** *MONDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**LECTURE + LUNCH**  
SPECIES: RABBIS, HUMANS, AND OTHER CREATURES IN LATE ANTIQUITY WITH **RACHEL RAFAEL NEIS**
- 16** *TUESDAY @ 12:00 PM*  
**BOOK TALK + LUNCH**  
MR. STRAIGHT ARROW: THE CAREER OF JOHN HERSEY WITH **JEREMY TREGLOWN**
- 29** *MONDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**FILM@IIJS**  
WHO WILL WRITE OUR HISTORY WITH **SAMUEL KASSOW**

## MAY

- 02** *THURSDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**COMICS@COLUMBIA**  
COMIC BOOKS, AMERICA, AND THE HOLOCAUST
- 07** *TUESDAY @ 6:00 PM*  
**LECTURE**  
ANTI-SEMITISM, POPULISM AND MIGRATION IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY WITH **FEDERICO FINCHELSTEIN**
- 09** *THURSDAY @ 7:00 PM*  
**FOREIGN POLICY BOOK TALK**  
SPIES OF NO COUNTRY: SECRET LIVES AT THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL WITH **MATTI FRIEDMAN**



WEDNESDAY @  
6:30 PM LIGHT RECEPTION;  
7:30 LECTURE  
VISIT [IJS.COLUMBIA.EDU](http://IJS.COLUMBIA.EDU) FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

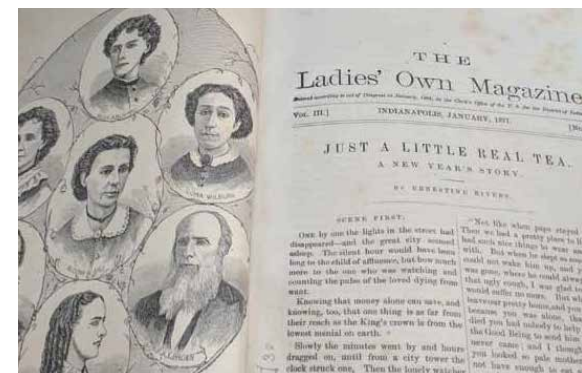
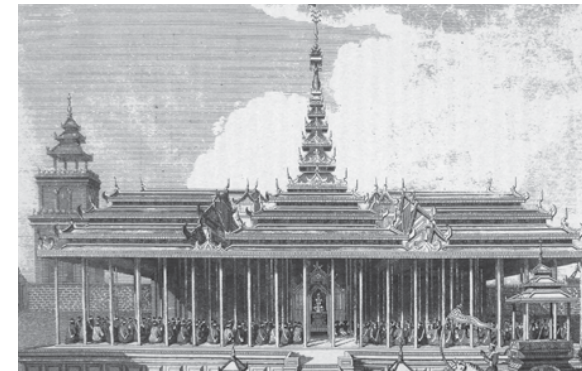
4.3

## THE NAOMI PRAWER KADAR ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE WITH JONATHAN D. SARNA

**THE FIRST AMERICAN JEWISH WOMAN NOVELIST:**  
UNCOVERING THE STORY OF CORA WILBURN AND HER  
JEWISH-SPIRITUALIST NOVEL, COSELLA WAYNE (1860)

Who's ever heard of Cora Wilburn, the first Jewish novelist in America? At nineteen, she'd traveled the world and disdained its corruption. Clawing her way out of poverty as the Civil War divided the United States, she traded her needle for a pen, fighting for women's rights, abolition, and her own freedom to rejoin the Jewish people. Hear from **Jonathan D. Sarna** as he shares the life and literature of this extraordinary woman, whose newly-discovered diary contains some poignant words in Yiddish.

**Jonathan D. Sarna** is University Professor and the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, where he directs the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies. He is also the Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish history in Philadelphia and chair of the Academic Advisory and Editorial Board of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. His many books include *AMERICAN JUDAISM: A HISTORY*, soon to appear in a second edition.





# INSTITUTE CORE FACULTY

**ELISHEVA CARLEBACH**, INSTITUTE DIRECTOR  
*Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society*

**REBECCA KOBRIN**, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
*Russell and Bettina Knapp Associate Professor of American Jewish History*

**BETH BERKOWITZ**  
*Ingeborg Rennert Associate Professor of Jewish Studies*

**CLEMENCE BOULOUQUE**  
*Carl and Bernice Witten Assistant Professor in Jewish and Israel Studies*

**YINON COHEN**  
*Yosef H. Yerushalmi Professor of Israel and Jewish Studies*

**JEREMY DAUBER**, DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
*Atran Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture*

**NAAMA HAREL**  
*Lecturer in Hebrew Language, Hebrew Language Coordinator*

**AGNIESZKA LEGUTKO**  
*Lecturer in Yiddish, Director of the Yiddish Language Program*

**YITZHAK LEWIS**  
*Lecturer in Hebrew Language, Academic Advisor*

**SETH SCHWARTZ**  
*Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Classical Jewish Civilization*

**MICHAEL F. STANISLAWSKI**, DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
*Nathan J. Miller Professor of Jewish History*

## Administration

**DANA KRESEL**, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**DINA MANN**, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

**BETTY BEECHAM**, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

# GET INVOLVED



Join us at our public events



Learn more about Friends of the Institute



Give back and support our students and faculty

# THANK YOU

Thank you to all our donors for supporting Columbia University's center for the academic study and discussion of Jewish life, history, and culture.

Your support allows students to explore their interests in Jewish Studies, encourages dialogue and discourse at our events, and allows faculty to conduct research that further nourishes scholarship.



**DAVID P. STONE**  
*Columbia College '67*

"I contribute annually to the IJJS because I find that, even in New York City, the work that it does and the programs that it presents to the public are unique and extremely important. The intellectual level of the Institute's work and programs is on par with that of the rest of Columbia University, which is, of course, top notch. The Institute researches and presents programs about subjects that no other institution addresses--whether in the fields of literature, cinema, history or current events and so much more--and it does so without political, denominational or other bias. The IJJS is a precious gem that requires and deserves all of the support that the community (whether in NYC or elsewhere) can contribute and I enthusiastically invite others to join me in helping to provide such assistance."

**DEBORAH SACHARE**  
*Barnard College '12*

"The Undergraduate Israel Fellowship allowed me the opportunity to forge a bond with a place that I previously had little connection to. Happy to report that I am currently back in Israel on a one-year fellowship with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Feels great to be back in a place that now feels like home, and I'm thrilled to be able to support the IJJS that made that possible to begin with."