



ANNUAL REPORT

2009 - 2010

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Fall, 2010

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Jewish Studies Annual Report 2009-10

The Program in Jewish Studies has had a wonderfully productive second year of consolidation during which we have begun to see the fruits of our hard work at program-building. What follows is a survey of major accomplishments during the 2009-10 academic year.

New Website

A highlight of the past year was the launching of the new Jewish Studies website, which includes greatly expanded pages on community and scholarly resources and a page with announcements of coming events. The motif for the website comes from the art of Marc Chagall, specifically the lithographs displayed in the Jewish Studies offices at 140 Buttrick Hall. The new website will facilitate access to Jewish Studies programs and events for Vanderbilt faculty and students and members of the Nashville community.

Faculty

Although we did not hire any new faculty whose tenure home is Jewish Studies, we have had the pleasure of seeing the program grow and prosper, in part because of the contributions of faculty hired the previous year: Adam Meyer, whose specialty is Blacks and Jews in America; Ari (Alexander) Joskowicz, whose specialty is Modern European Jewish History and European History; and Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman, who has several specialties, including Rabbinics, Medieval Jewish and Islamic history, and comparative law. These new faculty enhance our presence in European Studies, African-American and Diaspora Studies, and the Law School, where Prof. Lieberman will be teaching a course on Jewish law during spring, 2011.

Our faculty have been very professionally active during the past year. Professors Lieberman, Cohen, Joskowicz, and Kelner presented papers at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference in Dec., 2009. In addition to many articles, there have been major books: Shaul Kelner published *Tours that Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (New York: NYU Press, 2010). Phil Lieberman saw the publication of the five-volume reference work he co-edited, *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010) and Jack M. Sasson, along with Alexandra Kleinerman edited *Why Should Someone Who Knows Something Conceal It?: Cuneiform Studies in Honor of David I. Owen on His 70th Birthday* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2010).

Allison Schachter received a Research Scholars Grant from Vanderbilt to support a research leave for the 2009-2010 academic year. During this time she completed her book manuscript, *Diasporic Modernism: Hebrew and Yiddish in the Twentieth Century*, which is forthcoming with Oxford University Press in 2011.

Julia Cohen received a Research Scholars Grant from Vanderbilt to support a summer research in Istanbul, Turkey. During this time she undertook additional research for her book manuscript, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Belonging*.

Ari Joskowitz received a Research Scholars Summer Grant from Vanderbilt in the summer of 2010. He used this support to do additional archival research in Paris, Strasbourg, Colmar, and Metz for his book on Jewish anticlericalism in Germany and France in the long nineteenth century.

Course Offerings

Both enrollments and the diversity of our course offerings have gone up during the past year. We created a new sequence of Jewish History offerings: JS 122 Classical Judaism: Jews in Antiquity, JS 123 Jews in the Medieval World; and JS 124 Perspectives on Modern Jewish History. Over the 2009-10 academic year, Jewish Studies offered the following courses:

- Jewish Studies 115F.01. In a Pluralistic Age: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Spain, Lieberman
- Jewish Studies 115F.04. FYS: Civil Rights and Civil Wrongs: Black-Jewish Relations in the 1950s and 1960s, Meyer
- Jewish Studies 115F.05. FYS: Gender, Sexuality, and Desire in Jewish Literature, Klass
- Jewish Studies 115F.08. Berlin: Cabaret, Communism, Creativity, Urban
- Jewish Studies 115F.09. Jews and Muslims: A Modern History, Cohen
- Jewish Studies 120. Islam and the Jews, Lieberman
- Jewish Studies 136W. Imagining the Alien: Jewish Science Fiction, Klass
- Jewish Studies 156. The Holocaust, Joskowitz
- Jewish Studies 157. Modern Jewish History, Cohen
- Jewish Studies 158. World Jewish Communities in the New Millennium, Kelner
- Jewish Studies 180W. Introduction to Jewish Studies, Meyer
- Jewish Studies 222. Jews in Egypt, Wasserstein
- Jewish Studies 233. Issues in Rabbinic Literature, Lieberman
- Jewish Studies 234. Reading across Boundaries: Jewish and Non-Jewish Texts, Wasserstein
- Jewish Studies 244. Freud and Jewish Identity, Geller
- Jewish Studies 250. Is G-d Guilty? The Problem of Evil in Jewish Thought, Urban
- Jewish Studies 252. Jewish Social Movements, Kelner
- Jewish Studies 253W. Witnesses Who Were Not There: Literature of the Children of Holocaust Survivors, Meyer
- Jewish Studies 294.06. Special Topics: Jews and Judaism in Latin America and Caribbean Literature, Miller

Among the highlights of the course offerings included Ari Joskowitz's course in the Holocaust, which was hugely oversubscribed; Phil Lieberman's course in Rabbinics, which enrolled students spanning the Divinity School, the Graduate Department of Religion, and the College of Arts and Science; and Judy Klass's course titled "Imagining the Alien: Jewish Science Fiction," which was quite popular with majors in science and engineering whom Jewish Studies courses often fail to reach.

MA and PhD Programs

We already have an MA program, which conferred the MA in Jewish Studies on Daniella Pressner and Chris Agliano during the 2009-10 academic year and admitted three new students who will begin their degree training in fall 2010. During the 2009-10 academic year we also awarded our second Certificate in Jewish Studies to graduate student Chris Paris, and made plans for creating a PhD program as funding becomes available. The core faculty agreed that our Vanderbilt PhD degree in Jewish Studies will be a cooperative venture between Jewish Studies and other academic departments: specifically Philosophy, History, and the Graduate Department of Religion, all of which have a critical mass of faculty interested in Jewish Studies topics within their respective fields. We are looking forward to creating a genuinely interdisciplinary PhD program that will offer students rigorous work in a traditional academic discipline as well as in Jewish Studies. Our students will be qualified for university teaching positions either in the discipline in which their PhD is located or in Jewish Studies. While full implementation of the program will have to await funding for two or more graduate slots, in the interim we plan to set the basic structure for the PhD programs in collaboration with Philosophy, History, and the GDR.

Lecture Series

As a service to our own faculty and to the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities, the Program in Jewish Studies offers an annual lecture series, usually on a single theme and designed to offer multiple perspectives. The topic for the 2009-10 academic year was "Muslims and Jews," and included the following events:

- Mark Cohen, The Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, "The New Muslim Anti-Semitism," Thursday, September 10, 2009

- *Salata Baladi* A film by Nadia Kamel. Presented by: Allen Hibbard, Professor of English and Director, Middle East Center, Middle Tennessee State University and Sonja Hedgepeth, professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Middle Tennessee State University, Tuesday, October 6, 2009

- Bernard Avishai, Author of *The Hebrew Republic*, "Israel and the Palestinian Middle Class," Thursday, October 29, 2009

- David Wasserstein, Eugene Greener, Jr. Chair in Jewish Studies; Professor of History and Jewish Studies, Vanderbilt University, "Jewish Moneyers in Islam," Wednesday, December 2, 2009



- Matthias Lehmann, Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies, Associate Director, Borns Jewish Studies Program, Indiana University, "Networks of Beneficence: The Jewish Leadership in Istanbul and the Jews of Jerusalem in the Eighteenth Century," Tuesday, February 9, 2010



- Exhibit of photographs from the Ottoman Empire and reception, sponsored by Society of Universal Dialogue, "Under Vine and Fig Tree: 500 Years of Turkish Jewish History," Tuesday, February 9, 2010

- Richard McGregor, "The Mother of the World and Her Museums: the Control of Religious Objects in Post-Colonial Cairo," February 22, 2010
- The grand finale of the series was a roundtable discussion on "Muslims and Jews" in April, 2010, that highlighted the diversity of Vanderbilt's faculty expertise in the topic. Moderated by Leor Halevi of the Department of History, the roundtable discussion featured Jewish Studies core faculty David Wasserstein, Julia Cohen, and Phil Lieberman. They were joined by Lenn Goodman of Philosophy and Richard McGregor of Religious Studies. The event was well attended and its cross-disciplinary meeting of minds represented a highly satisfying conclusion to the year's diverse offerings by visiting scholars.





Although it was not formally part of the Jewish Studies lecture series, we take special note of the fact that Jewish Studies core faculty member Amy-Jill Levine gave a marvelous talk on March 18 in the Chancellor's Lecture Series. Her topic was how Christian sermons often get Judaism wrong. It was titled "Jesus, Judaism, and Jewish-Christian Relations" and was attended by a large and diverse audience of Jews and Christians. In part as a result of this talk and the campus-wide goodwill it generated, the Program in Jewish Studies has nominated Prof. Levine, whose current academic affiliation is in the Divinity School, to a University Professorship. University Professors have the right to teach in two different schools across the university – in Prof. Levine's case, Divinity and Arts and Science. This award was still pending as of the end of the academic year.

We are happy to be in a position to co-sponsor other Jewish Studies-related lectures around campus and in the community as well. During 2009-10, these included:

- Ari Kelman, Associate Professor of History, University of California Davis, "Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio in the United States," Wednesday, October 7, 2009
- With the Divinity School, "Evidence for Judean Exiles in Mesopotamia," Laurie Pearce, Lecturer in Assyriology, University of California, Berkeley, Monday, October 26, 2009
- Julius Grey, Canadian lawyer and professor, and one of Canada's leading socialist and minority rights advocates, "George Eliot, Eliza Orzeszkowa: Two Different 19th Century Visions of the Jewish Question," Tuesday, November 3, 2009
- With The Coe Lecture Fund and the Department of Communications, Mick Moloney, "Irish and Jewish Collaboration in the Popular Music of the Early 20th Century," November 5, 2009
- With the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies, "National Narrative and Untimely Death: Journeys into the Nation State in an Age of Globalization," Professor Peter Fritzsche, of the Department of History at the University of Illinois, Thursday, December 3, 2009
- Elaine Hoter, Head of Information Technology at Talpiot College of Education in Holon, Israel, "Building Bridges between Muslims and Jews: Online Communication and Education," Monday, December 7, 2009
- With the Department of Religious Studies, Film screening and discussion, "The Burdensome Stone: *This is Where It All Began. This is Where It Will Begin Again*," with Professor Martina Urban, March 16, 2010

- With the Department of History, Ibrahim Mumayiz, Independent scholar, “Nineteenth Century American Travelers to the Levant and Arabia,” March 16, 2010
- With Congregation Sherith Israel, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*, a reading, book signing, and picture show, March 17, 2010
- With Department of English and Peabody College, “The Red Scarf and the Black Briefcase,” a two-person cabaret-styled performance (for an actor and a *chanteuse*/pianist) based on an original poem by Rick Hillis. Friday, March 19, 2010
- With the Department of Religious Studies and the Religion and the Arts in Contemporary Culture Program of the Divinity School, “Icon of Loss: The Haunting Child of Holocaust Survivor Samuel Bak,” Gary A. Phillips, Dean and Professor of Religion, Wabash College, Tuesday April 13, 2010

Jewish Studies Faculty Suppers

The Program in Jewish Studies also offers Faculty Suppers so that faculty and graduate students from across the university can get together to discuss a topic of interest in an informal setting. We have decided that two suppers per semester is the right number. The Faculty Suppers during 2009-10 were:



Robert Barsky, “Motorcycle Diaries and Interviews: Avukah” Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Pam Belford, Judy Klass, and Steve Goodie in the Round: “Jewish Singer-Songwriters in Nashville,” Monday, November 16, 2009





Shaul Kelner, "Israeli Birthright Tourism's Global Context," Monday, February 1, 2010

Barbara Hahn, "Letters, Letters - or How To Publish Rahel Levin Varnhagen's Writing," Monday, March 22, 2010



Conclusion

The Program in Jewish Studies would like to thank all the faculty, student, administrative, and community participants who have helped to make the past year's programs a success. We are looking forward to further expansion of our events and course offerings, and to an enhanced presence at Vanderbilt and in the Nashville community.