“That doesn’t mean I have never felt pressure,” Edwards admits. “But I didn’t choose Gender Studies and Jewish Studies—they chose me. In no other fields have I seen the world so clearly defined by my identity. This year, for example, I was visiting a higher level Modern Hebrew class to promote Jewish Studies course offerings, and Professor Shomer asked me at the last minute to give my spiel in Yiddish! It was perhaps a little choppy but I definitely got my message across and I think the other students appreciated it.”

As the work of her career at Carolina burns ever shorter, Edwards is hopeful for the future as she navigates entrance into the work force and eventually graduate school. But first, shortly following graduation in May, she plans on taking a year to laven to participate in the excavation at Huqoq.

**Avery Edwards, ’17**

“Tikun omen (repairing the world) has always been a guiding principle for me,” says Averyl “Avery” Edwards, ’17. “It’s important to talk about inequality not just because we are Jews and we know what it’s like, but also because we are commanded to take action to improve the lives of those around us.”

Edwards is currently wrapping up her double major in Religious Studies/Jewish Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies and she sees her majors as two sides of the same coin—as part of her unwavering determination to fight injustice in the world.

Enrolling in a Modern Hebrew course for the language requirement paved the way for her to take her first Jewish Studies content class the following semester—“Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Judaism,” taught by Professor Andres Cooper—and this course in turn led her to the two majors.

“I know it sounds cliché,” Edwards admits, “but I didn’t choose Gender Studies and Jewish Studies—they chose me. In no other fields have I seen an identity so strongly defined by its culture. There are the only topics I could read about forever and never get bored.”

Her passion for these topics has culminated in her senior honors thesis project that explores modern scholarship on Genesis 1:27, “male and female created He them.” Edwards is putting her academic interests into action around campus. She holds leadership positions at UNC Hillel, including serving on the Hillel Student Board and as director of the a cappella group Sabras, while also spearheading numerous events on gender equality. This year, Edwards is also serving as the undergraduate student representative on the Center’s Advisory Board and is working on behalf of the Center as an intern. Her responsibilities focus on helping promote the Jewish Studies academic programs, course offerings and extracurricular events by creating outreach materials and holding face-to-face meetings with students to generate awareness and interest.

“This internship is providing unique opportunities for me to use what I’ve learned in the classroom,” said Edwards. “For example, one day I was visiting a higher level Modern Hebrew class to promote Jewish Studies course offerings, and Professor Shomer asked me at the last minute to give my spiel in Yiddish! It was perhaps a little choppy but I definitely got my message across and I think the other students appreciated it.”

As the work of her career at Carolina burns ever shorter, Edwards is hopeful for the future as she navigates entrance into the work force and eventually graduate school. But first, shortly following graduation in May, she plans on returning to laven to participate in the excavation at Huqoq.
NEWS BRIEFS
Bead Erickson, a graduate student in the department of Religious Studies, has created three-dimensional models and high-definition renderings of ancient synagogues in Israel. Erickson’s work was made possible in part by a gift from the Department of Religious Studies, has been supported in part by the Atlantic Coast Conference, ACC Scholarships.

Rosa Perelmutter to the enhancement, support and/or reception of the University. Contact rvb@email.unc.edu.

Jewish History Through Music, continued from page 1

Rilke, his final composition as a prisoner at Theresienstadt; on Sunday, April 2 it will be a concert featuring the works of UNC composers Stefan Litwin and Allen Anderson. The detailed schedule for the academic symposium on March 31–April 2 will be posted online in early 2017. The entire conference will be free and open to the public, no tickets or reservations required.

The culminating artistic event is April 20th, when the UNC campus will host the signature concert of The Defiant Requiem Foundation, Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín, which tells the story of the courageous Jewish prisoners in the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp Orchestra during World War II who performed Verdi’s Requiem while experiencing the depths ofhuman degradation. With only a single amplified score, they performed the celebrated oratorio six times. Conductor Rafael Schachter told the choir: “We will sing to the Nazi what we cannot say to them.” The concert features the UNC Symphony, Carolina Choral Chamber Singers and the Men’s and Women’s Glee Clubs, soloists, actors, and conductor Murray Sallman. The Defiant Requiem at UNC is the product of interdepartmental collaboration by the department of Music, the department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies. The performances will be held at Memorial Hall and the cost is $10 general admission, $5 for students and UNC faculty/staff. Tickets for the April 20 performance will be available in early 2017 and information will be posted on jewishtatunes.unc.edu.

Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín

Rafael Schachter, a conductor and composer, will bring to life “lost” Yiddish songs of the World War II in this all new and compelling concert program. These previously unknown Yiddish songs were forbidden and held by the Soviet government in 1945, and are only recently come to light. The concert/lecture features the performance and incredible stories behind these treasures. Photo: D. Rosenberg.

From the director’s desk

Carolina’s Human Heart

“Zog nit kemol ma al d’geyt dem letzn veg” (Never say that you are going on your final road) is one of the best-known Partisan songs. Written by Hisha GLUK in the Vilna ghetto in 1945, it became widely known in the ghetto, among Partisans and in the camps. Nowadays, the song is included in many observances around the world to commemorate the Holocaust. There are, however, many more important and moving pieces of music—and thus the Center’s spring events will focus on the topic of music and the Holocaust. It will highlight the manifold traditions which helped to form Jewish cuisine of the past and of today and it is made possible with the generous support of Naomi and Susan Pittman. Looking at these and other events, the semester promises to be a “full plate” and, as always, I thank you for your support which makes it possible for us to “bring this to the table.”