

NEW COURSE:
Confronting Antisemitism

Ruth von Bernuth, director of the Center, was the guest speaker on February 3rd.

Offered for the first time in spring semester, "Topics in Jewish Studies: Confronting Antisemitism" allowed undergraduates to take a broad look at antisemitism in history, our contemporary world and on campus. The idea for the one-credit-hour course was initiated by an undergraduate student, and with the support of the College of Arts & Sciences and its Countering Hate initiative, instructor **Max Lazar** worked with faculty, students and administrators to quickly develop the new course.

"Because the course was added to the spring schedule at the last minute, we weren't sure how many students would actually enroll," said Lazar, a Ph.D. candidate in the department of history. "But during the winter break, we saw an impressive wave of enrollment and had to increase the class size limit. Then, right before the start of the spring semester, we had the fantastic problem of scrambling to find a larger classroom to accommodate nearly 50 students."

When creating the course, Lazar said his first challenge was to determine how to cover so much content with just one hour of class time each week.

"All of us involved in the planning process soon realized that this course demanded experts from many different disciplines if the students were going to digest the complicated

[See NEW COURSE, continued on next page]

Undeterred in
Unprecedented Times

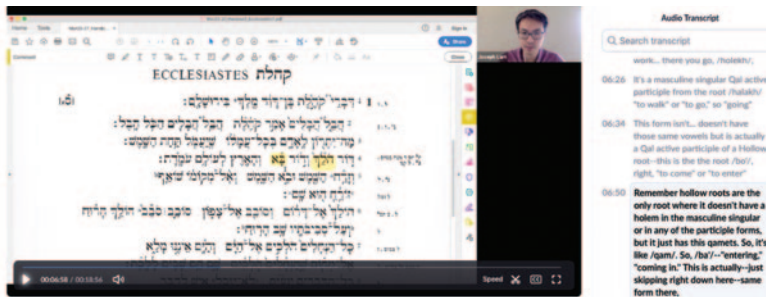
After spring break, Carolina moved to remote instruction for the remainder of the semester and Jewish studies courses were quickly revised to meet academic requirements while also supporting our students during these trying times. Faculty held synchronous online class sessions, transformed lecture notes into multimedia presentations, arranged virtual guest speakers and set-up remote office hours, all while learning how to harness new technologies. Our events programming also moved online, including a Zoom seminar with David Lambert, department of religious studies, and a remote Twitter Chat, hosted by UNC World View and based on their podcast titled: A Hidden Child of the Holocaust.

For the fall semester, the University is planning to offer a blend of in-person and online instruction and is introducing Carolina Away, a program that offers remote instruction to students that cannot attend

classes on campus. In addition to online versions of existing courses, Carolina Away also provides several new courses exploring the COVID-19 pandemic. The format of these courses is based on the Center's "Confronting Antisemitism" course and will feature a guest expert each week. **Robin Buller**, Ph.D. student in the department of history, worked with the Center's director, **Ruth von Bernuth**, to create a new course focused on religion and disease from the middle ages to the present. Meanwhile, this fall's Jewish Studies Capstone Course is "Women, Gender, and Judaism." Discussion topics include feminist Jewish theology, gender identity, the rabbinic ordination of women and representations in media.

This coming year, our faculty members remain committed to providing meaningful instruction and finding ways to keep students connected to Carolina and the Center. Visit our social media sites for ongoing updates as we navigate the fall semester.

Joseph Lam, department of religious studies, shared a screen shot from his online Classical Hebrew course.



Students in **Gabrielle Berlinger's** Jewish Foodways course had a guest visit by UNC emeritus professor **Marcie Cohen Ferris**.



[NEW COURSE, continued from page 1]

topic through history while also developing tangible skills in identifying antisemitism and understanding current events."

As a result, each week the students were joined by guest speakers who addressed a wide range of topics—from medieval texts to contemporary social media, from medical quotas, legal ethics and white supremacy to Holocaust denial. When Carolina moved to remote instruction, the guest lectures were held on Zoom. Also held on Zoom was a roundtable discussion with Chancellor Guskiewicz and several community members.

Lazar designed the course so that students would understand the underlying features of different types of prejudice toward Jews as well as how antisemitism can creep into everyday life. The class also examines antisemitism's relationship to expressions of hate toward other groups. Lazar hopes that as a final takeaway, the course inspires students to become allies against hate speech, showing leadership both on campus and long after their time at Carolina.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

No Stone Unturned

By Ruth von Bernuth, Director

*Seymour and Carol Levin Distinguished Professor
Professor, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures
dir_jewishstudies@unc.edu, (919) 962-1509*

A few weeks ago I took my first daytrip out of Berlin since the Covid crisis in Germany had abated enough for recreational train travel to be considered safe and appropriate. My destination was the former East German industrial city of Magdeburg—not to see friends or the few other attractions that survived World War II, but, rather, to wander out toward the edge of town, where a sprawling nineteenth-century Jewish cemetery is located, a gorgeous wooded spot among unprepossessing surroundings.

Medieval Magdeburg was one of the most important cities in central Europe and Jews lived there for hundreds of years, despite blame and persecution during the Black Death, until their expulsion in 1492. It was not until 1806, in the era of the Napoleonic wars, that an organized community was tolerated again. We knew that my great-great-great-grandmother was among these new arrivals but we knew nothing of her background.

With a plan provided by the caretaker, it was easy enough to find the plot—and to find it empty. Accepting my fate and getting ready to move on, I noticed some broken stones that had been placed not far away, long ago to judge from the vegetation that covered them. This debris could have been anyone's and could hardly be legible, but, long story short, it was, of course, not just anybody's, and what could not be read with the eyes could eventually be traced with a finger.

So now I know that Friedericke's Yiddish

name was Fromet, that she lived from 1767 to 1841, and that she came, not as the family story confidently had it, from Berlin, but from the obscurer (but once a quarter Jewish) little town of Strelitz.

But almost as satisfying was the joy of spending a day far away from Zoom, where we have all—students, faculty, and administrators alike—been spending so much time since most of the campus closed and courses moved online. Teaching in Corona times is a challenge for students, instructors, and families and the Yiddish expression “oyzgezooimt” (zoom fatigue) became a widely used term in the academic world of Jewish studies and beyond. Despite the many disadvantages such as seeing each other only in a pixilated miniature version (if at all) and not being able to quickly respond to students, we are all learning together how to continue academic studies in a world struck by a pandemic. I was especially amazed by how quickly our graduate students found new ways to continue their work through virtual courses, study groups and research tools.

This fall, we will feature, for the first time, three graduate students who will present their work in short Zoom meetings. These talks will provide us with examples of emerging scholars in Jewish studies and I very much hope that many of you will not feel “oyzgezooimt” and will join us for the presentations in the coming months. After all, you do not need to be in Chapel Hill or on campus to zoom in!



Congratulations to Max Lazar on two recent awards. He was awarded the



Center's Goodman Dissertation Fellowship for the 2020-2021 academic year. The fellowship, made possible through a generous gift to the Center, supports a

Carolina graduate student working in Jewish Studies and enables the student to focus full time on his or her research. Lazar was also honored with a Student Undergraduate Teaching Award. These awards were established to recognize outstanding undergraduate instruction by both faculty and teaching assistants.

FACULTY Q&A: ELIZA ROSE

Exporting History to the Cosmos

Eliza Rose earned her Ph.D. from Columbia University and joined the department of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures in July of 2019 as assistant professor and Laszlo Birinyi Sr. Fellow in Central European Studies. She speaks and/or reads seven languages and, in addition to teaching Polish language classes, she also has added new course options for Carolina students with class titles such as “Red Planet: Science Fiction

and Fictions of Science in East and Central Europe” and “We, Robots: Identifying with our Automated Others in Fiction and Film.”



Interview by Justine Orlovsky-Schnitzler, graduate student, department of American studies, and 2019-2020 Lori and Eric Sklut Graduate Student Intern for the Center.

Q: How would you describe your research for someone unfamiliar with your field?

I study visual culture from Poland and East Central Europe. I look at how changing paradigms in technology, science and industry alter how people live together, work together, and picture their future together. My book project is a cultural history of art festivals and amateur film clubs in the industrial workplace in late-socialist Poland.

Q: Where does your research intersect with Jewish Studies?

A new project is devoted to the Jewish Labor Bund — a political party in interwar Poland that promoted the idea of “doykeit” (Yiddish for “here-ness”). Doykeit expresses an ethical commitment to remaining in diaspora. The Bund advocated for Jews to commit to Poland as their home and partner with socialist organizations to improve their living conditions. My project looks at the Morgnshtern sports clubs organized by the Bund as a platform for cultivating intersectional solidarity. I hope to revive the history of these clubs as a set of ideas relevant for thinking beyond conflict today. My science fiction story “Planet Doykeit” draws from this history and exports it to the cosmos.

Q: Could you speak about your experience publishing a short story in Yiddish?

“Planet Doykeit” is actually in English with Yiddish generously mixed in. It follows the early years of a Yiddish-speaking space colony on a planet orbiting a distant star. I explore the contradiction of staying put in diaspora, or roaming great distances in order to find home. Working with Yiddish was incredibly fun: I speculated on how the language might morph and mutate over centuries. The story debuted in the July/August 2019 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, will be included in the academic volume *Anti-Atlas: Towards a Critical Area Studies* (UCL Press, 2020) and will be translated into Polish and published in the magazine *Nowa Fantastyka*.

Schochet Family Series on Jewish Culture and Life

Last fall, Carolina launched the Schochet Family Series on Jewish Culture and Life. This series is generously funded by Barry, '69, and Jan, '75, Schochet in honor of their parents, Sidney, '40, and Mary Schochet, who dedicated their lives to fostering the Jewish community in North Carolina and sharing their passion for Jewish culture and history with citizens of all faiths. The Center and Carolina Public Humanities are proud to continue this work by bringing the lecture series to community colleges throughout the state. Last academic year, several of the Center's faculty members gave lectures for this series, including **Jodi Magness**, **Danielle Christmas** and **Michael Figueroa** (shown in photo at Robeson Community College.) Visit our web site for updates on fall 2020 Schochet Family lectures.



GRADUATE STUDENT UPDATE

PLAN B

Research from Home

When March rolled in, most of our graduate students had already finalized plans to travel during the summer months to conduct archival research, attend intensive language workshops and present at international conferences. They were all set to work and explore in Israel, Poland, Germany, Switzerland and New York City, but of course, all these travel plans were put on hold. By April, it became clear that students were not giving up on their precious summer months, but instead re-focusing to stay productive even while in their homes. Many students are concentrating on writing and researching dissertation chapters, while others are conducting interviews via Zoom, enrolling in unique online language courses or drafting articles for publication in academic journals. A few students have already sent updates on what they are doing this summer; visit our web site for more examples of student summer research.

Renewed Commitment

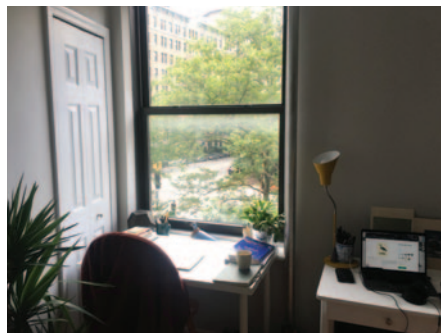
In light of recent tragic events, the Center is re-committed to the following pledge, which was initially drafted several years ago as worldwide incidents of hate became far too frequent. Since our founding in 2003, the Center has created student programming, offered new classes and hosted community events and academic conferences designed to create a dialogue regarding prejudice and intolerance. We will continue these programs in the coming year and years.

A wave of hostility directed at refugees, immigrants, Muslims, Jews, African Americans, Latinxs, LGBTQ communities, and other minorities has become apparent in the United States and across the globe. As teachers and researchers in Jewish Studies at UNC Chapel Hill, we are committed to speaking out when the lessons of Jewish history are relevant to the present. Jewish history has taught us that when a group of people is singled out as dangerous and targeted—whether based on religion, national origin, citizenship status, race, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, sexual orientation, or veteran status—this constitutes a threat to all of civil society. We therefore affirm the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies' **commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for its faculty, students, staff, and community and value the perspectives that diverse traditions and the free and open exchange of ideas bring to the academy.**

Jo Klevdal

Dept. of English and comparative literature

I am taking a six-week intensive Yiddish course at YIVO where I am enrolled in a reading class, a grammar class, a conversation class, and a literary seminar titled "Yiddish In/On New York," which focuses on Yiddish-American literature. In addition to this, I am participating in various Yiddish-based electives (including Yiddish yoga!). With all of these activities, I am involved in some form of Yiddish scholarship from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. most days and I am loving every minute of it! Through this experience, I hope to gain proficiency in reading Yiddish which will help further my studies in the role of memory and visual technology in American literature of the early 20th century.

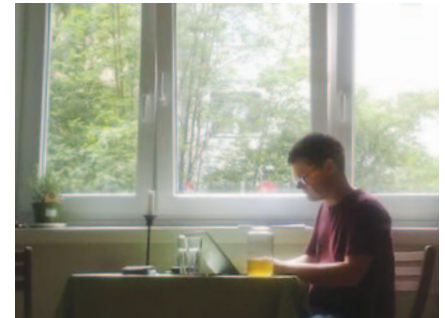


Klevdal's cozy "home office with a view" is where she does all her Yiddish coursework.

Josh Shelly

Dept. of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures

I am spending the majority of my time reading novels and essays by the German Jewish writer Arnold Zweig. His novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim* (De Vriendt returns home) and its connection to Theodor Herzl's Zionist writings is the subject of



Shelly at his "dining table/home office."

my next dissertation chapter. In addition, the doctoral students at the Dubnow Institut in Leipzig, Germany recently asked me to contribute to their blog. My short piece on an early Zionist Utopia and the Zionist longing for Europe was recently published under the title "The Other Fatherland." (The source manuscript is only available in an archive in Jerusalem, and I was first able to access it in 2019 during a trip to Jerusalem funded by a summer grant from the Center.) And finally, I will be spending part of this August and September attending a virtual Ulpan hosted by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. By the end, I will no doubt be proficient in Zooming Be-Evrit!

Justine Orlovsky-Schnitzler

Dept. of American studies

In June, I started YIVO's summer Yiddish intensive—offered online for the first time in the program's history. While immersing myself in this digital Yiddishland, I've been finishing research for my critical literature review and preparing to start interviews (via Zoom!) with the subjects of my thesis research project.

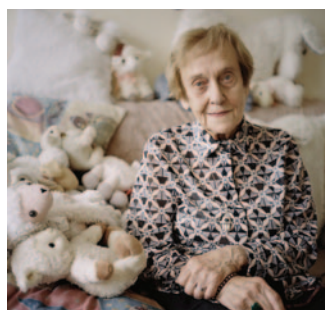
[See PLAN B, continued on next page]

Mazel tov and congratulations to all students who recently graduated with a minor, major, graduate certificate or a dissertation in Jewish studies! Special congratulations to two students that earned their Ph.D.'s and a graduate certificate in Jewish Studies: **Daniela R.P. Weiner**, department of history, and **Brad Erickson**, department of religious studies.

Summer Grants: Twelve UNC graduate students working in a field of Jewish studies received funding for summer 2020 remote work. These grants are made possible through generous private support.



Jodi Magness was inducted into the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences in fall 2019. Professor Magness is on the Center's steering committee and is the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism in the department of religious studies.



Gesche Würfel had a solo exhibition of her project titled, *What Remains of the Day: Memories of World War II*, in fall 2019 at GreenHill Center for North Carolina Art in Greensboro. The project explores the history and memory of World War II and the Holocaust through landscape photography, portraiture, sound and video. Würfel, '15 MFA, a teaching assistant professor in the department of art, received a research grant in support of this project from the Center.

The Fund for Jewish Studies provides unrestricted support that is essential for the Center to maintain its reputation for excellence while expanding its academic and public outreach programs for future generations. Donations made to the Center also count toward the Campaign for Carolina. To make your gift, you can use the enclosed gift envelope to mail in your check or use the online giving form found on our web site: jewishstudies.unc.edu.



Norman's summer project will soon move from her desk to her kitchen.

[PLAN B, continued from page 4]

Margaret W. Norman

Dept. of American studies

I am using this summer to continue working on my Yiddish, after beginning to study with professor von Bernuth this past spring semester. I am taking a weekly course through the Worker's Circle summer Yiddish program. I also am challenging myself with a small translation project: recipes from a 1930's vegetarian cookbook, "Gezunt Un Shpayz." I plan to test a few of my translated recipes at the end of the summer, and to write about the experience.

Daniela R.P. Weiner

Dept. of history

In the beginning of summer, I was (virtually) the 2020 Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar Follow-Up Grantee at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I used the museum's resources to transform my face-to-face "History of the Holocaust" syllabus into an online course. Beginning mid-July, I am teaching a digital course, "Nazis on the Silver Screen," on the history behind well-known films about Nazism and the Holocaust for the Case Western Reserve University's Laura & Alvin Siegel Lifelong Learning Program. I am also participating in an Association for Jewish Studies online summer writing group, as I work on a journal article about how the earliest history textbooks—published in the post-fascist successor states of East Germany, West Germany, and Italy between 1949 and 1960—evaluated the relationship between Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany during the 1930s.

Congratulations to Daniela, the Center's Goodman Fellow for 2019-2020. Daniela recently defended her dissertation in the department of history, and the topic of her dissertation is also now a published journal article, titled: American and British Efforts to Democratize Schoolbooks in Occupied Italy and Germany from 1943 to 1949. This fall she is a post-doc fellow at Stanford University.

Tine Rassale

Dept. of religious studies

Shortly before the spring semester ended I received an email asking me if I wanted to become part of a new initiative called Save the Ancient Studies in America (SASA). SASA is an online project which aims to unite ancient studies graduate students and early career academics to help create a groundswell of interest in this field, particularly for high school and college students. I am an Educational Ambassador, leading a free, online reading group on the Dead Sea Scrolls. We come together once a week for one hour over Zoom to talk about selected readings that I provided. Each week we are tackling a different Dead Sea Scroll or topic that deals with Qumran, the caves, or the Jewish sect of the Essenes. Participants zoom in from all over the world and include high school students, retired people who never had the chance to study the ancient world, and even a Franciscan monk from Indonesia! It is genuinely a lot of fun and just one of the ways in which I feel I can still make an impact and connect with people interested in my field, despite being locked up in my apartment.

Lea Greenberg

Dept. of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures

This summer I have been continuing work on the fourth chapter of my dissertation, which looks at the story "The Shylock of Barnow" (1870) by Karl Emil Franzos. I explore how the Jewish daughter is a cipher for questions of modernity and conceptions of Bildung. As the title of the story suggest, the work also includes intertextuality with Shakespeare's famous play The Merchant of Venice, so it has been interesting tracing the history of the Shylock character and the way his reception has shifted over the years. In addition to working on the dissertation, I am also already busy thinking about and preparing for the upcoming job market—whatever that may (or may not) look like in the coming months. I greatly appreciate the support that the Center for Jewish Studies has provided me in these confusing and unprecedented times. Thank you!

FALL 2020 NEWS FROM THE CENTER

UNC-Chapel Hill, Campus Box 3152, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3152

Stay Connected: Visit our web site at jewishstudies.unc.edu for more information. If you'd like to receive email updates about upcoming events, please join our listserv by emailing us at jewishstudies@unc.edu or signing up via our web site. We're also @uncjewishstudies on Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn and our social media links are available on our home page: jewishstudies.unc.edu.

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FALL 2020 EVENTS

All events will be remote via Zoom. Please visit our web site for details on how to sign up and access the online events. If you cannot attend live sessions, look for event videos on our Vimeo and YouTube sites. Additional events scheduled for fall 2020 and spring 2021 will be posted on our social media sites and jewishstudies.unc.edu.

SEPTEMBER 14, 5:30 P.M.

Swastikas on Jakob Schiff-Straße: The Peculiar History of Jewish Street Names in Frankfurt am Main, 1872-1938 / Max Lazar, Ph.D. student in the dept. of history

OCTOBER 15, 5:30 P.M.

Advocacy for Holocaust Education in Late 1950s West Germany / Daniela R. P. Weiner, post-doc fellow at Stanford University

OCTOBER 28, 7:00 P.M.

The Morris, Ida and Alan Heilig Lectureship in Jewish Studies — **Melancholic Redemption and the Hopelessness of Hope: From Kafka to Dylan** / Elliot R. Wolfson, distinguished professor of religion at University of California, Santa Barbara

NOVEMBER 16, 5:30 P.M.

La Confédération Universelle des Juifs Sépharadites: Building a Transnational Sephardi Network out of Interwar Paris / Robin Buller, Ph.D. student in the dept. of history. Co-sponsored by the Association for Jewish Studies

Jonathan M. Hess Term Professor

Candace Epps-Robertson, assistant professor in the department of English and comparative literature, was named the very first Jonathan M. Hess Term Professor.

Established in honor of Jonathan M. Hess, former director of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and chair of the department of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures, this professorship is given to the pre-tenured assistant professor in the fine arts and humanities who most fully honors the commitments that animated Hess's professional life: producing outstanding scholarship, demonstrating excellence in teaching, and supporting the development of gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness within the fine arts and humanities professions.

Epps-Robertson is the associate director of The Writing Program and director of the Writing in the Disciplines Program. She researches, writes, and teaches about rhetoric, literacy and composition studies. Her primary research investigates the ways in which communities teach, practice and understand what it means to be a citizen.



By Hannah Montgomery, graduate student writer, department of English and comparative literature