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The Center has firmly established itself as one of the leading Jewish studies programs in the nation, and we could not have reached this level of success without the generous support of so many. Gifts at all levels enable the Center to maintain its reputation for excellence and to expand programs for students, faculty and the community. To learn more about Jewish Studies the Carolina Way, and how to be more involved with the Center, visit jewishstudies.unc.edu.

AN EXCITING YEAR FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

This year the Center is again hosting a series of lectures and special events, starting last semester with the Evans Lecture with alumna Naomi Graber, followed by a special evening of poetry with Ronny Someck (shown in photo), and our annual Margolis Lecture that focused on Southern Jews and the Lost Cause. More recently, we also have hosted several Emerging Scholars online talks given by the Center’s graduate students, the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day lecture and the Sephardic studies lecture. Our events have been co-sponsored by numerous other academic units, showcasing our interdisciplinary focus. Many thanks to everyone that attended, and if you missed an event, lecture videos can be found on the Center’s YouTube channel (UNC Jewish Studies). In addition, visit our website for bonus materials from Ronny Someck, who wrote poems while visiting Chapel Hill!
Undergraduate Education
At the very heart of our mission is educational programming. All incoming undergraduates at Carolina have a robust (1) general education program to complete, along with the requirements for their majors and minors. The Jewish studies course offerings meet these gen ed requirements and provide hundreds of students each semester with learning opportunities in a wide range of subfields. As part of the academic program, the College offers several (2) unique courses, including the gateway course, “Introduction to Jewish Studies,” and an upper-level Capstone course that features a new topic led by a different faculty member each year. In addition, the one-credit undergraduate research projects, including the Carolina’s Impact of Antisemitism. The Center also has hosted conferences on Jewish material culture, German-Jewish studies and Jewish food. Our programs are often held in partnership with other centers and departments, resulting in a (3) campus-wide impact.

Community Outreach
The Center has hosted more than 200 (12) public events, including lectures, film screenings and musical performances since its founding. This includes five endowed lectureships, plus other annual events such as the Holocaust Remembrance Day event, held each January. The Center’s (13) collaborations with Hillel, neighboring universities, local Jewish organizations, and other community agencies, such as the NC Museum of Art, have allowed the Center and its faculty to make important connections with the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill community and expand learning opportunities for Carolina’s students.

Interdisciplinary Research and Campus-wide Impact
Creating the breadth of academic offerings is the responsibility of the Center’s faculty members. Nearly 25 (8) faculty members, based in 11 academic departments, are affiliated with the Center and help advise students and develop programs. The Center’s (9) grant-making program allows students and faculty to pursue research initiatives, present at conferences worldwide, and complete their publications. In 2016, the Center hosted its very first multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, international (10) academic conference: Reconsidering Antisemitism. The Center also has hosted conferences on Jewish material culture, German-Jewish studies and Jewish food. Our programs are often held in partnership with other centers and departments, resulting in a (11) campus-wide impact.

Grad Student Programs
Carolina competes with other prestigious institutions for highly-qualified graduate students, and recruitment fellowships are an essential tool in this effort. The Center provides Top-Up awards and (14) TEP Fellowships to help bring these talented students to Carolina. Grad students affiliated with the Center all have home departments across the humanities and earn their degrees from these departments. Adding on a (15) Certificate in Jewish Studies gives Carolina’s students the option to expand their coursework, demonstrate Jewish language skills and showcase their dissertation with a focus on a subfield of Jewish studies. Graduate students study in nearly a dozen different home departments at Carolina, but the Center’s (16) Grad Student Network provides the means for them to meet and learn from each other. The Network hosts meetings, seminars and special training events for skill development. Providing funding to grad students in their final years at Carolina through (17) Dissertation Completion Fellowships is a top priority for the Center. Since 2012-13, the Center has provided one student a year of funding so the student can focus on researching and writing their dissertation. (18) Grad Student alumni of the Center with Ph.D.’s and Master’s degrees focused on a subfield of Jewish Studies are now enjoying productive careers in academia and academic-adjacent careers. Many alumni are on the faculty of peer institutions, and helping guide the future of Jewish studies academics.

Visionary Supporters
The Center has benefited from outstanding (19) leadership with a bold vision right from the beginning, including founding chair of the advisory board, Eli N. Evans, and our former faculty directors Jonathan M. Hess and Ruth von Bernuth. Their combined leadership, vision and dedication to the creation and evolution of the Center help inspire and fuel the Center as it moves into its third decade of excellence. Alumni and friends make everything possible, from endowed faculty chairs and lectureships, to research grant funding for faculty and students, to all our special programming and services. This (20) sustained support will help ensure that the Center’s work continues to benefit future generations of students at Carolina.

20 highlights from 20 years

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Faculty Profile

Jillian Hinderliter
Interviewed by Ellen Perleberg, graduate student assistant

Tell me a little about your current book project.
My current book project is about American Jewish women active in the feminist health movement from the 1960s through the 1980s. I am interested in a broad understanding of the women’s health movement and how Jewish social justice values intersected with feminist thought. It’s also about the question of what compels activism. How does someone make that shift from a dissatisfied individual patient experiencing sexism in medical care to an activist?

What big lessons do you hope students take away from your classes?
I hope that my students take away that politics is many things, not only formal politics as people understand it through voting and lobbying. I emphasize with my students that conversations about health inequities are also political conversations, and that in the classroom, we’re asking broader questions about authority and power and how people who are so often marginalized make inroads in these systems.

Every historian has that one story from their research that makes them say “That’s why I do what I do.” What’s yours?
Someone’s story that’s really moved me is that of Rose Kushner. Rose was born in 1929 to immigrant parents. She was interested in medical careers, but that was ultimately inaccessible to her, so she became a journalist. It’s not until she herself has breast cancer that she starts deeply investigating contemporary issues around breast cancer surgery and patients’ rights. Through her patient experience, she has this very real shift from being a health journalist to being a health activist. Here she was, this woman in the 1970s who was taking a bath and found a lump. And what did she do? She went to the library. She found one book in the public library about breast cancer. So she essentially wrote the books she could find. The Jewish press did talk about her as a Jewish woman, as someone from a community where breast cancer was more prevalent. The BRCA gene discovery wasn’t made yet, but many in the Ashkenazi community understood their higher risk. Rose discusses these trends and becomes a powerhouse. She speaks with researchers worldwide and puts in rhetoric from health feminism and patients’ rights. I am always taken aback by how powerful her voice was because she herself had to make these decisions. She was one of those activists who just seemed to be everywhere.

Jillian Hinderliter is an assistant professor in the Women and Gender Studies Department and the Moss M. and Hannah L. McKinn Fellows in Jewish History. Hinderliter joined Carolina, and the Center, in July 2022.

Grad Student Profile

Jocelyn Burney, Uhlman Fellow

Burney’s project is focused on a collection of Iron Age pottery from Tel Arad, a major Israelite cunic site in the northern Negev Desert in Israel. In the early 1960s, UNC Professor Bernard Boyd participated in these excavations and brought back a collection of pottery, which he donated to the department of religious studies. This took place before the UNESCO World Heritage Convention was passed in 1972, so it was legal, but resulted in the objects being divorced from their context. Burney plans to create a new exhibit for the pottery tracing the objects’ journey from Arad to Chapel Hill, and she also hopes to add some new information on Professor Boyd.

“I am interested in a broad understanding of the women’s health movement and how Jewish social justice values intersected with feminist thought. It’s also about the question of what compels activism. How does someone make that shift from a dissatisfied individual patient experiencing sexism in medical care to an activist?”

Jocelyn Burney, Ph.D. candidate in the department of religious studies, is the inaugural Uhlman Fellow in Jewish Studies Public Humanities. Burney’s research centers on the material culture of the ancient Mediterranean world, and she is also a field archaeologist. She earned a BA in Religious Studies and Archaeology at California and an MA from Yale Divinity School. She is one of the Center’s Tau Epsilon Phi Graduate Student Fellows in Jewish Studies, and plans to graduate this May.

The year-long Uhlman Fellows program provides training to graduate students working in the humanities, and includes a series of discussion sessions with the College’s Adams Fellows, an annual symposium with a keynote speaker on a topic in the public humanities, and creation of a new public program by the student.

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Celebrating 20 Years of Jewish Studies the Carolina Way

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