

CAROLINA CENTER for JEWISH STUDIES

NEWS FROM THE CENTER EALLS

New Faculty and Visiting Scholars

This fall, the Center welcomes five new faculty members and visiting scholars in Jewish studies.

Adam Cohn joins the department of romance studies as assistant professor and JMA van der Horst Fellow in Jewish Studies. He specializes in modern Spanish literature, with a focus on race, diaspora, and Judaism in early 20th century Spain. This fall he will teach a First Year Seminar titled "Jewish Spain: History and Culture Across the Hispanic World."

Jennifer Grayson joins the department of history as assistant professor and Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat Fellow in Jewish Studies. Her research deals with Jewish communities in the medieval Middle East and she works with documents from the Cairo Geniza, a treasure-trove of medieval manuscripts from a synagogue in Cairo.

Three other scholars will further contribute to our curriculum this year. Emily Katz has been appointed as a parttime faculty member in the department of American studies and will offer a variety of Jewish studies courses, especially on Jewish-American writers. Jackie Feldman, a professor at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, is a visiting professor in the fall semester, sponsored by the Israel Institute, to teach a course on tourism in the Holy Land, including Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy sites, offered through the department of anthropology. And finally, Brett Ashley Kaplan, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, is this year's Keohane Visiting Professor. (See story on back cover.)

These new faculty members and visiting scholars will allow the College to expand course offerings in Jewish studies and they will be active members with the Center and will work with affiliated faculty, grad students and undergraduates.

Celebrating 20 Years

Our anniversary celebrations in March welcomed students, alumni, supporters and community members to campus for several special events. The community reception and music performance was an amazing evening featuring a fusion of world music and jazz blended with Jewish Hasidic sounds. Hundreds of attendees enjoyed the incredible talents of Daniel Zamir and Gadi Lehavi, and helped us celebrate our milestone and look forward to our future.

The following day, the Center hosted its advisory board and other alumni and supporters for a brunch meeting that included welcome remarks from James White, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and toasts to the Center's future from Jonathan Fassberg, chair, Eric Sklut, past chair, and Marcie Cohen Ferris, professor emerita.

Also held that week, the Center hosted its first alumni event, a career roundtable with current graduate students and recent graduates that were involved with the Center during their graduate school years. This hybrid event included alumni working in faculty/academic positions and academic-adjacent positions.

TOP PHOTO: Daniel Zamir and Gadi Lehavi jazz performance SECOND ROW, LEFT: Dean White welcomed the Center's advisory board to brunch.

SECOND ROW, CENTER: A career roundtable conversation with recent graduates and current graduate students

SECOND ROW, RIGHT: (L-R) Gadi Lehavi; Patricia Rosenmeyer, director of the Center; Hanna Sprintzik, dept. of Asian and Middle Eastern studies; Eric Sklut, advisory board member/past chair; Yaron Shemer, dept. of Asian and Middle Eastern studies; Jonathan Fassberg, advisory board

chair; Daniel Zamir











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ARTS AND SCIENCES

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A Truly Welcoming Year

Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, Director

Seymour and Carol Levin Distinguished Term Professor G.L. Paddison Professor of Classics, department of classics Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies dir_jewishstudies@unc.edu, (919) 962-1509

Last year was a truly memorable year for the Center as we marked our 20th anniversary with a



wonderful celebration in March. It was fantastic to see so many community and university members present at the reception and concert. I couldn't have imagined a more wonderful way to mark this milestone than the

fantastic performance by Daniel Zamir and Gadi Lehavi, with their fusion of world music, jazz, and Hasidic sounds. Thank you to the audience members for their enthusiastic reception of the (dynamic) duo!

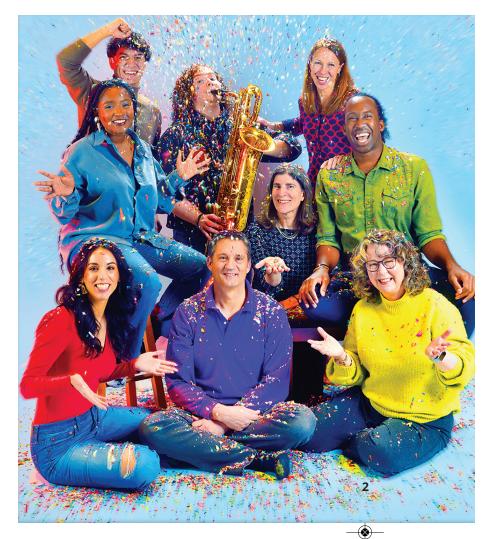
I am happy to share with you some of our other exciting accomplishments this academic year. We have been fortunate to recruit two new tenure-track faculty in Jewish studies and we are so very grateful for the van der Horst and Eizenstat endowment funds that support these hires. In addition, we are likewise excited to welcome Brett Ashley Kaplan as this year's Keohane Professor, and we are eager to create this programming with our colleagues in the provost offices and at Duke Jewish Studies.

Turning to our graduate students, there are more successes to kvell over! Thanks to generous donor funding, Morgan Morales and Tara Jordan have received dissertation completion fellowships from the Center. They will present remote Emerging Scholars talks later this year, and I hope you can join us to learn more about their work. Oskar Czendze is our Uhlman Fellow in Jewish Studies Public Humanities this year; he plans to work on Jewish oral histories of the American South and will also present his work to the community. And, this fall we welcome a new TEP Fellow to Carolina, our first student in the second cohort. Providing this level of support to graduate students is a top priority for the Center and is made possible entirely through private gifts.

My goal this year is to work with the Center's Executive Director to identify areas for growth. Some of our priorities are to continue to expand Jewish studies course offerings for undergraduates; to create more community partnerships, including collaborations with Hillel; to brainstorm with directors of Jewish Studies Centers at other universities; and to consider longer term opportunities such as visiting professorships or post-doctoral fellowships.

As always, I sincerely thank all of you who contributed on UNC's Giving Day, and I invite you to continue to support the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, whether through our Annual Fund, or other generous donations. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and engagement!

Dr. Rosenmeyer was featured in the spring edition of *Arts & Sciences Magazine* and is shown in the center of this cover story photo. Visit our website to read the article.







Holocaust Studies lecture held in January 2023.

2023-2024

Events Schedule

Please join us for our upcoming community event series. Unless otherwise noted, all events are in person, will begin at 5:30pm and will be held in the UNC Sonja Haynes Stone Center. These events are free and open to the public, and we very much hope you will join us.

FALL 2023

- Sept. 12 **Between Hebrew and Greek: The Transformation of Hebrew Traditions into a Greek Register**Heilig Lecture with Hindy Najman, Oxford Univ.
- Oct. 16 **The Soviet Jewish Bookshelf: Its Authors and Readers** *Kaplan Brauer Lecture with Marat Grinberg, Reed College*
- Nov. 8 **Title TBA** *Keohane Lecture with Brett Ashely Kaplan, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
- Nov. 13 Confronting Authority In Pursuit of Justice: Lay People's Voices in Talmudic Jewish Courts

Evans Lecture with Lynn Kaye, Brandeis University

SPRING 2024

- Jan. 22 **Jews and the Pig: A History**Community Lecture with Jordan D. Rosenblum, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Feb. 5: **Holocaust Studies Lecture, Title TBA** *Keohane Lecture with Brett Ashely Kaplan, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
- Feb. 26 Voices of Jewish College Students: "Anti-Zionism Quickly Became
 Anti-Semitism on Campus"

 Margolis Lecture with Ariela Keyser, emerita, Trinity College
- Mar. 18 **Title TBA**Keohane Lecture with Brett Ashely Kaplan, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Apr. 8 **The Mizrahi Protest: Lessons from History**Sephardic Lecture with Henriette Dahan Kalev, emerita, Ben Gurion University in the Negev

Additional events, including our remote Emerging Scholars lectures, will be scheduled for this upcoming academic year. Please visit **jewishstudies.unc.edu** for updates and the full schedule.

NEWS BRIEFS

FACULTY

Yaron Shemer, department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, was honored with a Schwab Academic Excellence Award in spring 2023. Presented by the Institute for the Humanities, the award recognizes outstanding teaching and scholarship in the arts, humanities, and qualitative social sciences. Prof. Shemer is shown in photo with poet Ronny Someck at an Oct. 2022 event.





Joseph Lam, department of religious studies, has recently released a 12-lecture course on Wondrium (formerly The Great Courses), entitled: Creation Stories of the Ancient World. Visit our website for details.





NEWS BRIEFS

STUDENTS & ALUMNI

Samuel J. Kessler, assistant professor of religion and Åke and Kristina Bonnier Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies at Gustavus Adolphus College, has recently published: *Formation of a Modern*



Rabbi: The Life and Times of the Viennese Scholar and Preacher Adolf Jellinek (Brown Judaic Studies). Kessler earned his Ph.D. from the department of religious studies and the graduate certificate in Jewish studies in 2016.

Max Lazar has been appointed chair, high school social studies department, at the Abraham Joshua Heschel School. He earned his Ph.D. from the department of history and the graduate certificate in Jewish studies in 2021.





Daniela R. P. Weiner has been appointed lecturer in the Civic, Liberal, and Global Education program at Stanford University. She earned her Ph.D. from the department of history and the graduate certificate in Jewish studies in 2020.

The Tau Epsilon Phi Graduate Student
Fellowship in Jewish Studies provides incoming
students with two full years of funding and
additional programming in support of their
doctoral work in a subfield of Jewish studies.
The first cohort of four TEP Fellows is currently
finishing up their time at Carolina, and in 20232024, the Center welcomes the first TEP Fellow
for the second cohort. As part of our 20th
anniversary weekend, the TEP Fellows gathered
to talk about the impact of the fellowship and
their upcoming career plans. In photo, TEP
Fellows Jocelyn Burney, Joseph Block, Tine
Rassalle, and Oskar Czendze with alumnus and
former advisory board member Steve Nislick.



Grant Awards for Student and Faculty Support

In 2022-2023, the Center made grant awards in support of faculty research and travel, course development, undergraduate study abroad and research, grad student research and travel, as well as grad student recruitment. More than 24 different endowed and expendable funds gifted to the Center made these grant awards and other research funds possible. On behalf of all our affiliated faculty and students, thank you for your support of our work in Jewish studies.

Graduate Student Awards

Dissertation Completion Fellowships

Morgan Morales, dept. of history, for her dissertation titled: A Matter of Life and Death: Jewish Women Who Chose Abortion During the Holocaust; and

Tara Jordan, dept. of music, for her dissertation titled: "Mi Monastir": Remembrance and Reconstruction of Interwar Monastir's Jewish Musical Life. (See profile on page 7.)

Tau Epsilon Phi Graduate Student Fellowship in Jewish Studies

Rachel Greiner, dept. of American studies

Uhlman Fellowship in Jewish Studies Public Humanities

Oskar Czendze, dept. of history

Top Up recruitment grant
Julia Wedgle, dept. of religious studies

Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants

Jack O. Spies and Family Jewish Studies Summer Stipend 2023

Elena Peña-Argüeso, dept. of romance studies, for her dissertation research titled: Catholics, Protestants, and Jews: The Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) as literary entertainment; and

Emily Branton, dept. of religious studies, for her research excavation project at the Huqoq site.

Carolina Center for Jewish Studies Research and Travel grants

Seonghyun Choi, dept. of religious studies, to present a paper at the Society of Biblical Literature Conference;

Ellen Perelberg, SILS/Library Science, to present a paper at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting;

Tara Jordan, dept. of music, to participate in the joint annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology and the American Musicology Society, and the Special Interest Group for Jewish Music Studies.

Frances Carol Eizenstat Student Travel grant

Alison Curry, dept. of history, to conduct research in Poland for her dissertation project titled: Ritual, Tradition, and Change in the Jewish Cemeteries of Poland, 1918-1945. (See profile on page 5.)

Marcie Cohen Ferris American Jewish History / Jewish Gender Studies Research and Travel grant

Oskar Czendze, dept. of history, to conduct archival research at the National Library of Israel (NLI) and at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem for his dissertation project titled: Galicia on Our Mind: The Role of Regionalism in New York's Jewish Immigrant Community, 1890-1938.

Philip L. and Melinda R. Kirstein Research and Travel grant

Oskar Czendze, dept. of history, see details above.

Jewish Language grant

Ameliah Leonhardt, Carolina-Duke Graduate Program in German Studies, for Yiddish training program to support her dissertation titled: Yiddish and German Women Writers: Biblical Interventions in Modern Times.

Undergraduate Study Abroad Grants and Research and Travel Grants:

Christine Stamey*, Zihan Liu, Juan Rodriguez, Olivia Clark, Ashley Jenkins, Halle Huffman, Hania Kantzer*, Alana Goldman and Lila Haller*

The students either participated in the Hugog



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dig in summer 2023 (see story on page 6) or spent a semester at Hebrew University or Tel Aviv University.

* Received support from the Elsie Kaplan "Mother" Shapiro ZBT Undergraduate Student Research and Travel Grant.

Faculty Research and Travel Grants

Rosa Perelmuter, dept. of romance studies, to hire a translator for her project titled "Yiddish Cuba: Community, Writings, Identity (1920-1960)";

Jennifer Gates-Foster, dept. of classics and curriculum in archaeology, for travel to Israel as co-director of the Omrit Settlement Excavation Project, located in northern Israel;

Karen Auerbach, dept. of history, to present her paper titled "The Nighttime Butterfly: A Young Woman in Warsaw at the Turn of the Century" at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference;

Yaron Shemer, dept. of Asian and Middle
Eastern studies, for research travel for his
book project "Israeli-Palestinian Encounters:
National Narratives in Political Cartoons,
Cinema, and Translation," and to present a
paper titled "So Close, So Far: Gaza in Israeli
Cinema" at the Association for Israel Studies
conference;

Yaakov Ariel, dept. of religious studies, for archival research for his project titled "From Communism to Buddhism: the Reconfiguration of Jewish Beliefs and Agendas, 1960s-1990s";

Andrea Cooper, dept. of religious studies, to present her paper titled "Prophetic Vision and Imagination: Reading Maimonides with Wolfson and Wyschogrod" at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference;

Jillian Hinderliter, dept. of women's and gender studies, to participate in the Association of Jewish Studies annual conference and the Paula Hyman Mentorship Program;

Gabrielle Berlinger, dept. of American studies, to present her paper titled "Everyday Things, Singular Stories: Preserving and Presenting Jewish Material Culture" at the Southern Jewish Historical Society (SJHS) meeting and to present her paper "Destruction as Preservation: New Approaches to Sites of Jewish Historical Memory" at the Vernacular Architecture Forum.

Course Development/Enhancement Grant

Hanna Sprintzik, department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, for travel to Israel to create new course materials for modern Hebrew instruction.

GRAD STUDENT PROFILE: ALISON CURRY

One of the Center's affiliated graduate students was recently featured in UNC Research's magazine, showcasing her Jewish studies and Holocaust studies research. Her graduate work has been supported by the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

Alison Curry is a PhD student in the department of history within the UNC College of Arts and Sciences. She studies the ritual, spatial, and functional uses of Jewish cemeteries in Poland between the interwar period (1918-1939) and WWII (1939-1945).



Q: How did you discover your specific field of study?

A: I first traveled to Poland in 2012 with my mother to learn more about our family's past. Both sides of my mother's family were from Poland, emigrating to the United States in the 1880s and 1910s. At that time, we knew little about their history — or Polish history, in general. We visited Warsaw's Okopowa Street Jewish cemetery, one of the largest in Europe today. I'm not a very spiritual person, but there is something quite special about that place that I've never been able to put into words. Since then, I've been to Poland seven times and have visited 25 Jewish cemeteries there. Later, I realized I have always been interested in cemeteries. In eighth grade, I wrote my final history class paper on historic cemeteries in Maryland. Somehow, it seems like this project was predestined.

Q: Academics are problem-solvers. Describe a research challenge you've faced and how you overcame it.

A: For the past seven years, I've been learning Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew. Language-learning is central to my research as most of the documents and sources I need to access are in these languages. East European Jewish history can also be a challenging field as many documents have been destroyed, often in one of the many wars taking place in this region over the past two centuries. This means I must be flexible. I take a macro-level approach to Jewish cemeteries for this reason, zooming in on specific towns to analyze their cemeteries. But, for the most part, I piece together stories from different places to create a coherent narrative.

Q: Describe your research in five words.

A: The dead impact the living.

Q: Who or what inspires you? Why?

A: My family. I'm fortunate to have amazing parents who know little about what it means to get a doctorate but are consistently supportive in every way. On a deeper level, I am also inspired by my ancestors: my great-grandfather, who immigrated from Poland as a young child; his parents, who left Poland with their seven children during the First World War; and their cousins, who didn't leave and ultimately died or were murdered in the Holocaust. I am not telling their stories in my research, but I wouldn't be doing it without them.

Q: If you could pursue any other career, what would it be and why?

A: A teacher. It's ultimately what I hope to do in the future as a professor. But I could see myself as a high school teacher if I didn't go down this path.

Editor's Update: Curry has received numerous research and travel grants, summer stipends, and Jewish language grants from the Center, all made possible through private support. Her summer 2023 research was supported by the Frances Carol Eizenstat Student Travel grant. Curry presented her work in the January 2021 remote event for Holocaust studies, which can be viewed on the Center's YouTube channel: uncjewishstudies.

Photo by Megan Mendenhall, UNC Research. Initially published in UNC Endeavors magazine and reprinted with permission.





Current and past Carolina students participating in the 2023 dig with Professor Jodi Magness: Bottom row, from left to right: Magness, Chrissy Stamey, Jocelyn Burney, Madi Huffman, Juan Rodriguez, Olivia Clark, Qinnan Hua, Caroline King. Top row, from left to right: Hania Kantzer, Matthew Grey, Zihan Liu, Jada Enoch, Emily Branton, David Richman. Missing from photo: Daniel Schindler (former Ph.D. student) and Blaine Jenkins (current undergraduate student).

In summer 2023, a team of specialists and students led by the Center's professor Jodi Magness uncovered a spectacular mosaic panel in the late Roman (ca. 400 C.E.) synagogue at Huqoq, an ancient Jewish village in Israel's Lower Galilee. The panel, which identifies the mosaic donors or artists, decorates the floor just inside the main entrance. An additional panel



(*inset*) featuring a dead Philistine horseman and soldier continues the story of Samson first discovered in prior dig years.

This was the 11th and final season of excavations in the 1,600-year-old synagogue at Huqoq, and this sweeping archaeological project has left an extraordinary legacy of historically significant finds. With the conclusion of excavations, the area will be turned over to the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Keren Kayemet Le'Israel (Jewish National Fund), which plan to develop the site as a tourist attraction.

Over the years, hundreds of students from Carolina have participated in the dig. The Center has provided financial support to Carolina's undergraduates and graduate students so they could participate in the program, in addition to providing co-sponsorship support for the project each year. Visit our website for the full press release for the summer 2023 dig season.

All photos by J. Haberman.



Mosaic discovered in summer 2023 dig season.



GRAD STUDENT PROFILE: TARA JORDAN Keeping stories alive: Documenting a disappearing culture through music

Tara Jordan's research illuminates the role that music played in the cultural life of the Monastirli Jewish community from 1912 until 1943. To aid her work, Jordan — a doctoral student in musicology — received research grants from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

Jews had lived in Monastir, in present-day North Macedonia, since Roman times. The area's Jewish population increased in the 1500s

when many Jews fled the Spanish Inquisition. Beginning in 1941, Bulgaria — on behalf of the Nazi regime — occupied Monastir. In 1943, Bulgaria deported all Monastirli Jews to Treblinka, a concentration camp.

"Monastir was absolutely decimated," Jordan said. "Percentage-wise, 99 percent of the community was killed.

Then the Bulgarian army destroyed the physical location. They bombed the synagogues; they tore down neighborhoods. Pictures and stories are really all that's left of Monastir. And these songs. I feel a responsibility to document them. These people have touched my life."

Before World War II, some Monastirli Jews had immigrated to the United States and Jerusalem. It is only because of these communities that there are any memories left of Monastirli culture. In the summer of 2021, thanks to a Carolina Center for Jewish Studies Graduate Student Research and Writing Grant, Jordan took an extended research trip to Seattle and spent time among two Sephardic Jewish communities there. She interviewed community members and attended services. "That research was foundational and set me up for success," she added.

In the summer of 2022, Jordan was again

helped by a research grant, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies Christopher Browning Holocaust Studies Research and Travel Grant. She traveled to Indianapolis, where a cluster of Monastirli had started a synagogue, Etz Chaim. Jordan attended services, visited congregants and looked through the synagogue's archives. She found photos

from 1910, when two families founded Etz Chaim, and more recent ones showing congregants dancing traditional dances and participating in talent shows.

Alan Cohen, the president of Etz Chaim, identified people in the photos, described the events and even sang some of the Judeo-Spanish songs he grew up hearing. This gave Jordan "huge insight into what kinds of things Monastirlis were singing after they came to the U.S."



The founders' wall at Etz Chaim synagogue (stainedglass section illustrated here) serves as a constant reminder of the congregation's Monasterli roots.

The grant also funded archival research trips to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and to New York City. "These grants did so much for me," Jordan said. "They have been a huge part of my dissertation research. I have partial drafts of two chapters already, and I would not be that far yet without these grants."

Editor's Update: Jordan also received support from the Center for her summer 2023 research in Bitola, North Macedonia, and holds a Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the Center for 2023-2024, giving her a full year of support so she can focus on research and writing her dissertation.

By Claire Cusick '21 (MA). Illustration by Christina Berkowitz. Initially published in UNC Campaign magazine and reprinted with permission.

Congratulations to Recent Graduates

We are so proud of all our graduating undergraduate students who have participated in JWST courses and the Center's programming. We also wish to congratulate our 2023 Ph.D. graduates, both of whom have been very involved with the Center and earned the graduate certificate in Jewish studies:

Jocelyn Burney was one of the Center's TEP Fellows, the Center's inaugural Uhlman Fellow in Jewish Studies Public Humanities, and her dissertation on the religious lives of diaspora Jews in mainland Greece, the Aegean and western Turkey won the 2023 Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award. (Award presentation shown in photo.) This fall, she joins the faculty at University of Missouri.

Joshua Shelly was a graduate student in the Carolina-Duke German Program and wrote his dissertation on German Jewish utopian literature and its role in the early Zionist movement. He has accepted a scholarly librarian position at the University of Potsdam in Germany. His 2023 Emerging Scholars lecture is available to view on our YouTube Channel (@uncjewishstudies).











FALL 2023 NEWS FROM THE CENTER

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Keep Connected: Visit jewishstudies.unc.edu to join our listserv and find social media links.

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. Please consider making a gift using the enclosed envelope or the online giving form on our website: jewishstudies.unc.edu.

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Keohane Distinguished Visiting Professor 2023-2024 to focus on Jewish studies and Holocaust studies



The Keohane Distinguished Professorship brings prominent faculty to serve as visiting professors at UNC and Duke for a one-year period, and ultimately, the program is designed to energize new scholarly connections between the two campuses. This program is managed by the provost offices at both campuses, this year in collaboration with the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and the Duke Center for Jewish Studies.

Brett Ashley Kaplan, director of the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, Memory Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, will visit the Carolina and Duke campuses three times this academic year, to give community lectures and academic seminars, visit classrooms, and meet with undergraduates, grad students and faculty.

Lecture topics, with a Jewish studies focus, will be announced in September. Please visit our

website, jewishstudies.unc.edu, for updated information. All community lectures will begin at 5:30pm and are free and open to the public. A light reception will follow these lectures. The tentative schedule is November 8 at the Duke campus, and February 5 and March 18 at Carolina.

Brett Ashley Kaplan received her Ph.D. from the rhetoric department at the University of California, Berkeley in 2002 and is now a professor and Conrad Humanities Scholar in the Program in Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her publications include, Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation (2007), Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory (2011), Jewish Anxiety in the Novels of Philip Roth (2015), Rare Stuff (2022) and Critical Memory Studies: New Approaches (2023).

