

Voices AND WISDOM

The Newsletter from the *FERN & MANFRED STEINFELD PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES*

GREETINGS! FROM THE DIRECTOR

We continue to offer an array of classes in Jewish Studies ranging from Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew to classes on Judaism, the Holocaust, Biblical Archeology, Ancient Judaism, and Hebrew Bible. We were delighted to offer two different new courses on Israel this year, including a course on Israeli culture that rotates topics allowing students to take it more than once and a course on the history of Zionism. The course on Zionism requires students to do research projects which will be presented at UT's annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EURēCA).

In addition to our student's research, we are also able to offer our students the opportunity to be exposed to scholars and their research around the world. Despite the limitations presented by COVID-19, we have been able to continue offering a variety of programs to enrich the experiences of our students and community. This fall, we had Julia Belzer Watts from Georgetown University present on disability and the Talmud for the Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture on Judaic Studies lecture. We also had a virtual play titled *Borders*, which explored a romantic relationship that crossed the Israeli-Lebanese border. Most ambitiously, we hosted a three-day Holocaust conference on campus which featured scholars from all around the world presenting in person and online.

We were able to welcome conference attendees from across the world using the UT conference system. This spring, we also hosted the Karen and Pace Robinson lecture series on the history of Zionism and featured four virtual speakers.

I also have quite a bit of good news related to my academic successes. In addition to being named co-editor in chief of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's academic journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* along with my colleague and fellow Judaic Studies faculty member Daniel H. Magilow, we were also invited to sit on the Academic advisory council for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In other good news, I also received a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study at the Central European University in Budapest. I will be in residence there from January 2023 - June 2023. While in Budapest, I will continue a research project on a group of Hungarian and Polish boys who were held at Auschwitz in the fall and winter of 1944. I hope this research will result not only in a book, but a richer learning experience for my students.

Sincerely,
Helene J. Sinnreich
 Director



A Focus on Israel

This year has been one with a tremendous amount of Israel content. We are offering two new classes on Israel. One is Contemporary Israeli Society & Cultures. This class has no prerequisites and is open to all students, fulfills a general education requirement, and will be offered every year. The new course changes themes and introduces students to different aspects of Israeli society. The second course is an upper division course for seniors and graduate students on Zionism and the State of Israel. It will be offered in alternate years and focus on the history of Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel. Concurrent with these new courses have been enrichment programs connected to the courses including a virtual play called *Borders*, which explored a love story between an Israeli man and a Lebanese man who met over the internet. This spring, we will have a series on the history of Zionism.

This year's **Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture Series** was on the history of Zionism.



In *Zionism: Ancient Dream or Modern Revolution*, Joshua Shanes discussed the Zionist idea exploring the ways in which it is tied to the past as well as how it is a modern phenomenon. Zionism - like all forms of modern Judaism - considers itself an obvious consummation of thousands of years of Judaism and of Jewish longing for the Land of Israel. Yet, like all forms of Judaism today, it is quintessentially modern. It is in fact a secular revolution that draws selectively on Jewish tradition - choosing some texts over others, some traditions over others - to make its case for authenticity. In his lecture, Shanes explained the emergence of the Zionist movement in its time and trace how it fit into the mosaic of modern Judaisms in the 20th century.

Shanes is associate professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Arnold Center for Israel Studies at the College of Charleston. He has published widely on modern Jewish politics, culture, and religion - as well as antisemitism and contemporary politics - in academic and popular outlets, including *Slate*, *Washington Post*, *Haaretz*, and the *Forward*.



For the next lecture, *Zionism and the First World War*, Jan Rybak discussed the ways in which and reasons Zionism spread within Jewish communities during and after the First World War. The years of the First World War in many respects saw the breakthrough of the Zionist movement. From just over 100,000 members worldwide in 1913 it multiplied sixfold until 1921. But this change was not only quantitative but also qualitative. The British government

promised the establishment of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine and Zionist leaders came to be involved in negotiations with governments - or even took over positions as ministers. Especially in Eastern and Central Europe, the Zionist movement developed from often rather isolated groups of predominantly male middle-class activists into a mass movement with deep roots in local communities and in many places, Zionists managed to assume communal leadership.

Rybak is a fellow at the Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism at the University of London. He holds a PhD in history from the European University Institute in Florence and has previously worked at the University of York, the University of Salzburg. He is the author of *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe: Nation-Building in War and Revolution, 1914-1920*, published by Oxford University Press in 2021.



In *Tel Aviv and the Creation of Urban Zionism*, Rachel S. Harris, spoke on Tel Aviv and the creation of the concept of Urban Zionism. Harris is associate professor of Israeli Literature and Culture in Comparative and World Literature and the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her recent publications include *An Ideological Death: Suicide in Israeli Literature* (2014) and *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema* (2017). She is the editor of *Teaching the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2019), and co-editor of *Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture* (2011) and *Casting a Giant Shadow: The Transnational Shaping of Israeli Cinema* (2021).

Our final lecture, *Desert in the Promised Land*, takes place Thursday, April 7 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.



Yael Zerubavel will tell the story of the desert in Zionist and Israeli consciousness from the early twentieth century to the present. She draws on Zerubavel's book, *Desert in the Promised Land*, published by Stanford University Press (2019). The desert has been at once an ecological phenomenon and a symbolic landscape that carries biblical and historical associations. In his presentation, she will address its complex role in the

Zionist imagination and in the history of the Jewish settlement of the Negev desert from the early twentieth century to the present. She highlights the complexities and sheds light on the contradictions that mark its varied interpretation as a frontier, periphery, and a unique ecological environment.

Yael Zerubavel is professor emerita of Jewish Studies and history at Rutgers University, where she served as the founding director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life (1996-1918) and the chair of the Department of Jewish Studies. Professor Zerubavel has published extensively in the areas of collective memory and identity, national myths, the transformation of traditions, war and trauma, and cultural perceptions of space, drawing on historical sources, Hebrew literature, educational materials, popular and folkloric forms, as well as in-depth interviews. She is the author of the award-winning book, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) and *Desert in the Promised Land* (Stanford University Press, 2019), and the coeditor (with Amir Goldstein) of: *Tel Hai, 1920-2020: Between History and Memory* (in Hebrew).

Registration is required. To register, visit: tiny.utk.edu/Desertinthesand

Energy and Interactive Learning in Hebrew Program

The Hebrew Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has grown tremendously over its early start years ago. In fall 2022, we will be offering a minor in Hebrew with classes in Modern Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew. Our modern Hebrew courses are taught by our Lea and Allen Orwitz Teaching Fellow in Modern Hebrew Revital Ganzi and our Biblical Hebrew courses are taught by Jack Love.

MODERN HEBREW has expanded with our first, third-year Hebrew classes beginning during the 2020-2021 academic year. Students in modern Hebrew learn to read, speak, write, and comprehend Hebrew while also receiving exposure to Israeli culture and society. All modern Hebrew courses incorporate cultural materials, media, and new technologies for language learning. In the upper levels, students take on projects to expand their Hebrew knowledge. In the past this has included making video tours

of campus with a GoPro video camera, researching specific topics, and indulging in Israeli food.

Our classes in **BIBLICAL HEBREW** led by Jack Love forged on despite the limitations of the pandemic. We had an excellent returning population from the prior year and a new crop of beginning students. Our second year Biblical Hebrew students focused on collections of Biblical poetry. Students begin with selections from the three great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and choose one from among the shorter prophetic books. Next, they read Psalms and Proverbs. True Biblical Hebrew was written without punctuation or vowels, and our students receive training on how they can read even the most ancient texts written in the older Hebrew alphabet on stelæ. The course concludes with students choosing whether to read texts in Biblical Aramaic or early Medieval Hebrew. Again and again Jack Love receives messages from our students telling him Biblical Hebrew remains the course that they recall as their best time



in undergraduate study. For those who might be interested in jumping into our second year program next year, we have posted a six credit intensive beginning Hebrew course for this summer which covers the entire first year course in one summer session.



Two Judaic Studies Faculty become editors of US Holocaust Museum academic journal

This fall, Daniel H. Magilow, Professor of German, and Helene Sinnreich, director of the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies, became the new co-editors-in-chief of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the academic journal of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“We are honored to take on a leadership role in our field’s most prestigious academic journal,” Sinnreich said.

Professors Magilow and Sinnreich have extensive experience collaborating on a scholarly journal and bring a unique combination of skills and experience to the role. For fifteen years, they worked together on the Journal of Jewish Identities. Sinnreich served as editor-in-chief. Magilow served as managing editor and book review editor. They have also worked closely with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum throughout their careers, serving as fellows,

presenting at conferences, participating in research workshops, and peer-reviewing for Experiencing History and Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

“Raising public awareness about the Holocaust and facilitating scholarship are two crucial roles the Museum fulfills in the United States and around the world,” Magilow said. “It speaks highly of UT’s reputation as a research university that the Museum would select two of our faculty to run its flagship academic journal. Serving as co-editors-in-chief is a tremendous opportunity and an important responsibility to advance the Museum’s mission.”

Professors Sinnreich and Magilow bring complementary knowledge to the helm of the journal with perspectives from different disciplines. Daniel H. Magilow’s teaching and research center on photography and film and their intersections with Holocaust Studies, Weimar Germany, and postwar memory. While Helene Sinnreich is a scholar of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust and European Jewry. Her research focuses on the experience of Jews in Nazi ghettos.

JUDAIC STUDIES PROGRAM

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Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship for 2021-2022

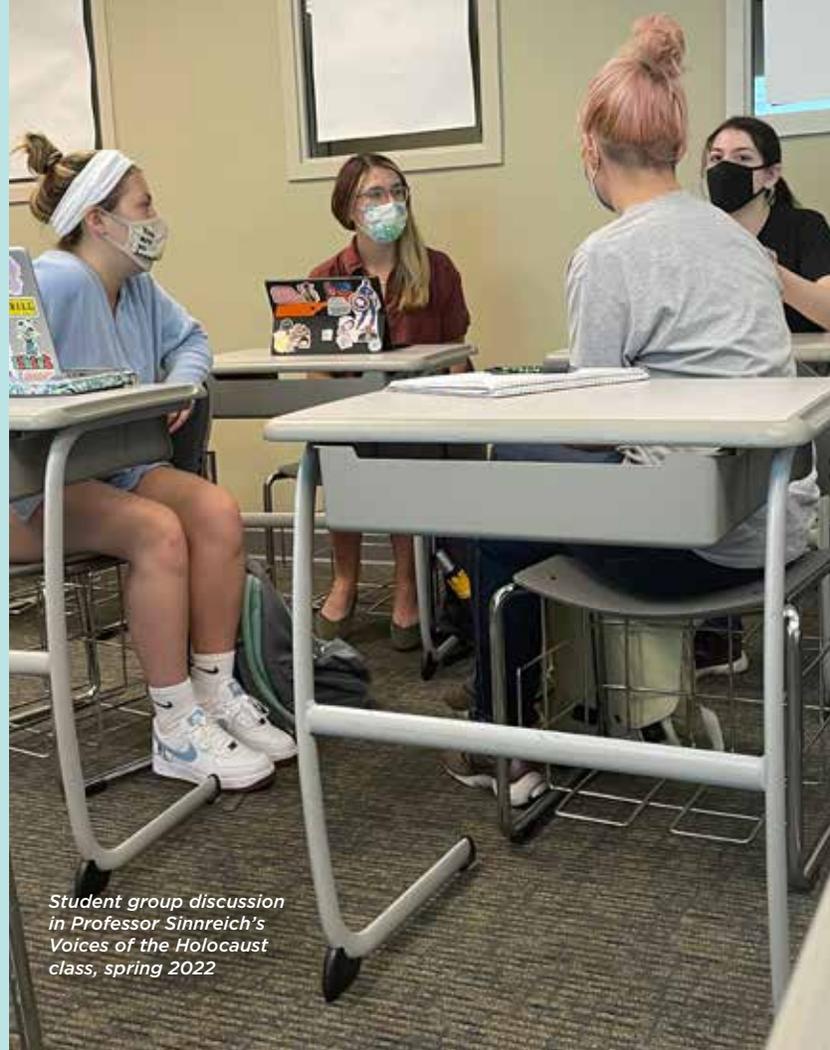
Jennifer Ware is the recipient of the Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarship for the 2021-2022 year. She is a non-traditional student double majoring in Judaic and Religious studies.

“Judaic studies was not originally one of my majors but after taking Dr. Helene Sinnreich’s Voices of the Holocaust class, I continued adding Judaic studies classes,” Jennifer said.

“I soon had enough to fulfill the requirements for a minor, but Dr. Sinnreich encouraged me to take Modern Hebrew and now it has been added as a major.”

In addition to being a scholarship recipient, Jennifer has served as Professor Sinnreich’s undergraduate research assistant. She spent the summer researching the Holocaust by reading through dozens of diaries and memoirs.

“Although it is a daunting task at times, I have learned so much and I value every minute spent reading the stories of those who went through the most horrific of events,” Jennifer said. “Judaic studies and the Holocaust are not what I thought would be my focus, however, I am so happy that I landed on this path. I look forward to more research as I continue on my academic journey.”



Student group discussion in Professor Sinnreich’s Voices of the Holocaust class, spring 2022