

PROGRAM IN JEWISH STUDIES

2022-2023

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

STUDENTS • ALUMNI • FACULTY • EVENTS



Program in Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR ELIAS SACKS OUTGOING DIRECTOR



Earlier this fall, I was invited to speak at a conference on Jewish and Muslim theology in Berlin. During the gathering, the former director of another Jewish Studies program at a prominent American university came over to me and said the following: “You’re the guy who runs the funky, interesting Boulder program, right? Your colleagues are doing work that’s really put CU on the map. Tell them to keep up the good work, and tell them congratulations.”

Although I don’t typically use the word “funky” to describe our activities as a Jewish Studies program, I found myself deeply gratified by this description. What my colleague was saying was that our work here in Boulder has made a difference. Whether it’s our classes on subjects from the Hebrew Bible to reproductive rights, public events on topics from Yiddish culture to food and Jewish identity, or ongoing initiatives such as our Schmooze-a-Palooza concert series and new grant to study Jews of color, our Program has become a space to ask new questions, produce new knowledge, and imagine new ways of building bridges between students, scholars, artists, and the broader public.

As I step down from my role as Director of Jewish Studies here in Boulder and assume my new position as Director of the Jewish Publication Society, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for creating an intellectual community that could garner this type of attention halfway across the globe. In a world where we seem to become more isolated and separated from one another every day, your generosity, passion, and vision have made it possible for individuals from diverse backgrounds to think, learn, and grow together. I’m honored and humbled to have had the opportunity to serve this community, and I’m deeply grateful for your partnership and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elias Sacks".

MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR SAMIRA MEHTA INCOMING DIRECTOR

I am excited to be stepping into the role of Director of Jewish Studies, and grateful to my colleagues for placing their trust in me. Our Program in Jewish Studies is very special. When I began my academic career, I was uncertain whether I would find a long-term intellectual home in a Jewish Studies program. My research explored Jewish life but focused primarily on interactions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the United States from World War II to the present. Indeed, over the course of attending meetings of the Association for Jewish Studies for more than a decade, I became increasingly aware that my work on interfaith families, contraception, and Jews of color is a bit, well, “funky” (to use Elias’s language). Ours, however, is precisely the type of cutting-edge program that is committed to broadening the horizons of Jewish Studies as a field. I made the decision to come to CU because of the creativity and intellectual community that our previous directors (David Shneer, Nan Goodman, Beverly Weber, and Elias Sacks) nurtured, and because of the amazing faculty doing a wide array of work. When I arrived, this sense that I found a home was only strengthened when I discovered that we also have profoundly talented staff, an unmatched dedication to students, and an engaged and passionate community unlike anything I thought possible at a large research university. It is a truly spectacular and extraordinary combination, and I am honored to be taking the reins.



In many ways, my vision for Jewish Studies builds on what you know. I am committed to maintaining all of those elements that makes us such a special place: our innovative scholarship, student community, and public-facing programming. Like my predecessors before me, I want to be an advocate for students, staff, and faculty within the university, and I want to take the scholarship and learning that we make possible and share it with the larger community: in Boulder, across Colorado, nationally, and internationally. I look forward to working with you in that process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samira K. Mehta".



WELCOME TO THOMAS PEGELOW KAPLAN



In Fall 2022, Professor Thomas Pegelow Kaplan joined the Program in Jewish Studies as the Louis P. Singer Endowed Chair in Jewish History. An internationally acclaimed scholar of Holocaust studies, German-Jewish history, and Central European culture, Professor Pegelow Kaplan comes to CU Boulder from Appalachian State University, where he served as Director of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies and held the Leon Levine Distinguished Professorship. He is the author of numerous articles and books (including recent and forthcoming volumes with Cambridge University Press, Yad Vashem Publications, and SUNY Press on genocide and language, German-Jewish journalism, and photography), and he has been, or continues to be, a visiting research fellow at institutions across the globe including Yad Vashem, the United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow in Leipzig, and the Center for Research on Antisemitism at the Technical University of Berlin. He has also organized academic conferences in the US and abroad, along with spearheading course exchanges and study abroad initiatives with institutions such as Western Galilee College in Israel. He has brought a number of visiting speakers to CU, including Holocaust survivor Zev Harel, who gave testimony about his struggles for survival at Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Ebensee. We are honored to welcome Professor Pegelow Kaplan to CU as the new Singer Chair in Jewish History, which was established by Boulder alumnae Midge Korczak and Leslie Singer Lomas to honor the memory of their father Louis P. Singer, who stoked their love of history and respect for civil rights.

WELCOME TO ANGELA WATTS

In Summer 2022, Angela Watts joined the Program in Jewish Studies as Manager of Finance and Business Operations. Having worked in both large private sector companies and small start-ups, she comes to CU with extensive background in project and financial management, ranging from managing multi-million dollar portfolios to creating courses on the role of the nervous system in daily life. She also has a passion for life-long learning that makes her feel at home on campus: she earned her undergraduate degree in Creative Writing at Western State Colorado University, and she continues to explore creative outlets beyond the classroom, including photography, dance, and open-mic nights. As a yoga teacher and practitioner, Watts strives to stay grounded, flexible, and curious (both on the mat and off), and she has received training in alignment principles as well as trauma-informed practices. We are thrilled to welcome Watts to the Program in Jewish Studies community.



Student Testimonial



*Adi Nester
CU PhD German Studies, 2020
Assistant Professor, UNC Chapel Hill*

“The Program in Jewish Studies at CU Boulder was instrumental to my development as a well-rounded scholar. As a graduate student, I was grateful to have the guidance and support of leading scholars in the field. The Jewish Studies Program facilitated conference travels, allowed me to expand my knowledge through organized guest talks and symposia, and offered valuable opportunities to workshop my project together.”



SPRING 2023 EVENTS

Programs are free and open to the public.

To learn more and view recordings of past events, visit www.colorado.edu/jewishstudies/events.



FEBRUARY

“Flight, Hiding and Rescue: Surviving the Holocaust Underground”

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM (MT) | Thursday, February 2, 2023 | Dr. Susanna Schrafstetter, Professor of History, University of Vermont | CU Faculty and Student Colloquium



“The German Resistance to Hitler and the Holocaust”

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM (MT) | Thursday, February 2, 2023 | Dr. Alan E. Steinweis, Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of History, University of Vermont | In-Person in the Norlin Library British & Irish Studies Room and Streaming via Zoom

MARCH

2023 Sondra & Howard Bender Visiting Scholar

Dr. Julia Watts Belser

Author of Power, Ethics, and Ecology: Rabbinic Responses to Drought & Disaster



Date and Time TBD | Dr. Julia Watts Belser, Professor of Jewish Studies and Disability Studies, Georgetown University and Senior Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs | Streaming via Zoom

STAY TUNED FOR MORE 2023 EVENT DETAILS

Annual Hebrew Schmooze-A-Palooza Concert | March 15, 2023

Holocaust, Genocide, and Contemporary Bioethics Program | April 17-21, 2023
In Partnership with CU Anschutz’s Center for Bioethics and Humanities

FALL 2022 EVENTS

Yiddish Paris: Creating a Jewish Nation Between Two World Wars

Monday, September 19, 2022 | Professor Nick Underwood, Berger-Neilsen Chair of Judaic Studies and Assistant Professor of History at the College of Idaho and CU Boulder Alum



This program celebrated the publication of Professor Underwood's first book, *Yiddish Paris: Staging Nation and Community in Interwar France* (Indiana University Press, 2022). This event was held as part of our Peak to Peak series, which brings scholars into conversation with audiences and communities across Colorado and beyond. Exploring influential historical figures and events and enduring human questions, these learning opportunities are offered through the CU Boulder Program in Jewish Studies in partnership with the Office for Outreach and Engagement Arts and Humanities Initiative and communities and organizations across Colorado: the Corazón de Trinidad Creative District, Garfield Public Library District, Trinidad Carnegie Public Library, Western Colorado University, Aspen Jewish Congregation, Boulder JCC, Kavod on the Road, and Temple Aaron in Trinidad.

For more details about the Peak to Peak Series and to view recordings of past webinars, visit www.colorado.edu/jewishstudies/peak-peak.

Surviving Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Ebensee: A Holocaust Survivor Gives Testimony



Thursday, October 6, 2022 | A Day of Testimony by Holocaust Survivor Zev Harel, Hosted by the Louis P. Singer Chair in Jewish History and the Program in Jewish Studies

Born in 1930 in Kis-Sikarlo, Transylvania, Hungary (present-day Romania), the young Zev Harel faced multiple anti-Jewish restrictions before Hungarian authorities forced his family into a ghetto. He was deported to Auschwitz in March 1944. During selections, Harel managed to convince the Germans that he was much older and was slated to do slave labor. Sent to Mauthausen, Austria, and Ebensee, he was forced to take part in the construction of an underground armament factory under unimaginably brutal conditions. Suffering from typhoid, he was liberated and rushed to a hospital in Linz by African-American soldiers from the U.S. Third Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in May 1945. Via a DP Camp, Harel left Europe for Palestine, where he fought in the Israeli War of Independence. He later studied in Israel and the U.S., earning a PhD and eventually settling in Cleveland, OH.

Know Your Nosh: Food, Jewishness, and Identity

Monday, November 14, 2022 | Professors Hilary Falb Kalisman, Samira Mehta, and Gregg Drinkwater in conversation with Professors Ari Ariel (University of Iowa), Adrienne Krone (Allegheny College), Ronald Ranta (Kingston University London), and Nora Rubel (University of Rochester)

This symposium brought together scholars working on the significance of food for Jewish religious, cultural, national, and political identities, focusing on the United States and Israel/Palestine. In our conversations, we explored how food, so often seen as simply bringing people together, can be, in the end, far more complicated.

This program was part of our ongoing Embodied Judaism and Israel-Palestine Studies series, and was supported by the David Shneer Fund for Community Programming, Public Scholarship, and the Arts.





FACULTY & STAFF UPDATES

Samuel Boyd's second book, *Babel: Political Rhetoric of a Confused Legacy*, is forthcoming with Fortress Press. He also contributed to a volume on language contact. **Brian Catlos** co-authored *The Sea in the Middle*, a textbook on the medieval West, along with an accompanying sourcebook, *Texts from the Middle*. His work also appeared in the New York Times Magazine. **Gregg Drinkwater** conducted research in London on transnational queer Zionism from the 1950s to the present. His project has been supported by the Association for Jewish Studies. **Nan Goodman** is a Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

She recently spoke at the Center and Johns Hopkins University on Louis Brandeis and the memory of Jacob Frank, an eighteenth-century Jewish messianic claimant. **Gregory Grobmeier** will deliver a lecture series for Trinity Methodist Church on "God and the Good after Auschwitz." **Hilary Falb Kalisman** published her first book, *Teachers as State-Builders: Education and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Princeton University Press). She also gave presentations on her new project, a political history of standardized testing in Israel/Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan. **Yonatan Malin** co-authored a paper in *Transactions of the International Society for Music Information Retrieval* on digitizing historical klezmer manuscripts from Kyiv. He also organized a roundtable at the joint meeting of the Society for Music Theory, Society for Ethnomusicology, and American Musicological Society. **Samira Mehta** delivered the keynote address at the Society for Jewish Ethics annual meeting. Her new book, *The Racism of People Who Love You*, is forthcoming with Beacon Press. **Thomas Pegelow Kaplan** organized talks by Holocaust survivor Zev Harel and Professor Helmut Walser Smith (Vanderbilt) at CU. He also spoke at the North Carolina German Studies Seminar Workshop Series, JLF Colorado 2022, and the Hebrew University. **Eyal Rivlin's** Nonbinary Hebrew Project was featured in a Reuters article on gender and language, and also appeared in the New York Times. He delivered presentations for the Central Conference of American Rabbis and a University of Maryland conference on Gender-Inclusive and Nonbinary Hebrew. **Maggie Rosenau** co-authored an article on disability, art, and resistance in *Feminist Formations*. They also contributed to a Diversity, Decolonization, and the German Curriculum teach-in on academic mutual aid and serve as Project Manager for Jews of Color: Histories and Futures. **Elias Sacks** contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Religious Ethics*, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, and a forthcoming volume on virtue ethics. He also spoke at a conference on Jewish and Muslim thought in Berlin. **Rebecca Wartell** conducted research on *conversa* women in the Inquisition at the National Archives in Lisbon, Portugal. She also presented papers at conferences hosted by the Mediterranean Seminar at the University of Haifa, Fresno State University, and CU Boulder, and is working on her first book on sixteenth-century Sephardic refugees. **Angela Watts** applied for a grant to create a peer mentoring program at CU and is relaunching the student advisory board for the Program in Jewish Studies. **Beverly Weber** published articles in *Transverse Disciplines: Queer-Feminist, Anti-racist, and Decolonial Approaches to the University* and *Feminist Formations*. She also became chair of CU's Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Through our Undergraduate Research Assistant program, the Program in Jewish Studies provides University of Colorado Boulder undergraduate students with opportunities to collaborate with faculty on cutting-edge research projects by asking new questions, producing new knowledge, and sharing their findings with diverse audiences.



Spring 2022 research projects included:

- **Contraception in the United States - Julia Leone and Daisy Fellows (with Professor Samira Mehta)**
- **Education in the Middle East - Andrew Nadas (with Professor Hilary Falb Kalisman)**

We are grateful for a generous gift from Joseph Goldhammer and Elizabeth Block that has transformed this initiative into an annual program, supporting a range of undergraduate research positions and a student research showcase event each spring. We're deeply thankful to Joseph and Elizabeth for this opportunity to support and empower CU students as they cultivate diverse skills, build mentorship relationships, and share their work with the broader community.

Learn more about Undergraduate Student Research Projects: colorado.edu/jewishstudies/undergraduate/UROP

STUDYING ABROAD IN THE MIDDLE EAST



After a long hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Program in Jewish Studies resumed its study abroad programming in Spring 2022, with Professor Hilary Falb Kalisman, Endowed Professor in Israel/Palestine Studies, launching a new course entitled **History Today: Nationalism and Collective Memory in Israel/Palestine**. After a semester-long class in Boulder, Professor Kalisman led a group of students on a ten-day trip to Israel and the West Bank/Occupied Territories/Judea and Samaria, meeting with diverse individuals from the region and visiting sites ranging from museums to archaeological parks to cemeteries and government buildings.

Through their time in Boulder and abroad, students built a community of learning where they could come together to explore questions related to history, memory, and nationalism in Israel and for Palestinians: a situation in which the relationship between these three categories is difficult and complicated.

JEWS OF COLOR: HISTORIES AND FUTURES

In 2022, the Program in Jewish Studies became the recipient of a three-year, \$250,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to launch **Jews of Color: Histories and Futures**. Spearheaded by Professor Samira Mehta, this initiative is a partnership between the Program in Jewish Studies and University Libraries, and will recover, study, and elevate the voices and experiences of Jews of color in the United States through four areas of activity:



- a working group of scholars, artists, and activists drawn from diverse communities
- the first digital archive centering the experiences of Jews of color, focused on oral histories and hosted by CU Boulder's Post-Holocaust American Judaism Collections
- public conversations on topics including Jews of color, racism, white supremacy, and American Jewish life
- publications, programs, and creative projects exploring these issues

We are deeply grateful to the Luce Foundation for its support, and honored to be the home for a program that exemplifies a commitment—to producing new knowledge, building new connections, and transforming the world—that stands at the heart of what it can and should mean to be part of a public university in the twenty-first century.

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2022!

MAJOR IN JEWISH STUDIES

Julia Hoa Leone
Brynn Elizabeth Tully
Kelly Rainier Lolly

MINOR IN JEWISH STUDIES

Michaela Hascall
Sydney Hanna Meyer

MINOR IN HEBREW & ISRAEL STUDIES

Nadiv Gold-Edelstein

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN JEWISH STUDIES

Dr. Tiffany Beebe,
PhD in History

Student Testimonial



Shane Ball
Current Jewish Studies Minor

“The Program in Jewish Studies has been an integral force throughout my journey at CU. Being a Jewish Studies minor has provided me with rigorous, interdisciplinary study, opportunities to pursue individual academic research, earn scholarships, travel and learn abroad, and build relationships with supportive faculty. The supportive and collaborative community of the program is unparalleled at CU.”



YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Alumni, donors, friends and community supporters bring the Program in Jewish Studies to life! Because of your commitment to PJS, we are able to provide students with the critical thinking and communication skills they need to navigate a diverse world and become leaders in their communities. Your gifts also help foster community education, support faculty research and staff professional development, and cultivate archival resources.

Thank you for your commitment to expanding the boundaries of academic learning.

Please support Jewish Studies by making a donation through the enclosed envelope or online at:
www.colorado.edu/jewishstudies/giving

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The Program in Jewish Studies Advisory Board is comprised of strong supporters of Jewish Studies. The mission of the board is to help the Program obtain resources for maintenance and growth, enhance the Program's reputation within CU and beyond, and help the Program facilitate community engagement and development within Colorado. We are grateful for the board's dedicated work to expand the reach of Jewish Studies on campus and in the wider community. Thank you for all you do.

Larry Cohn, *Chair*
Barry Baer
James Brantz
Jim Edelman
Sandy Friedman

Jon Goodman
Bruce Henderson
Midge Korczak
Johnathan Lev
Peter Ornstein

Douglas Sparks
Jack Zable
Elias Sacks, *Outgoing Director*
Samira Mehta, *Incoming Director*
Michelle Gaffga, *Advancement*