

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

FROM THE DIRECTOR



The Jewish Studies Program is pleased to share news of its programs and developments. During the past year, the Program has hosted several successful

events on Zoom and has returned to offering in-person programming as well. In April 2022, the Program hosted Ukrainian academic **Dr. Yuri Radchenko** on Zoom. He discussed being in exile following the Russian invasion of Kharkiv and his displacement in western Ukraine, as well as his academic work surrounding the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine and what academia looks like following the start of the war.

Also in April, the Program hosted a virtual book talk by **Dr. Rebecca Davis**, Miller Family Early Career Professor of History, on her book *Public Confessions: The Religious Conversions That Changed American Politics* (University of North Carolina Press, 2021) and the conversion of Sammy Davis Jr. to Judaism.



Bernice Lerner

In May 2022, the Program hosted **Dr. Bernice Lerner** for a lecture on Zoom about her book *All the Horrors of War: A Jewish Girl, A British Doctor, and the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen* (Johns Hopkins University

Press, 2020). Her powerful presentation detailed the experiences and survival of her mother, Rachel Genuth, as a Hungarian Jew during WWII, as well as the British Doctor Brigadier Hugh Llewellyn Glyn Hughes who oversaw the care and rehabilitation of survivors of Bergen-Belsen.

In October 2022, the Program hosted a virtual book talk by **Dr. Sasha Senderovich**, Assistant Professor of Slavic, Jewish, and International Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. His book, *How the*



Sasha Senderovich

Soviet Jew Was Made (Harvard University Press, 2022), details his research of Yiddish and Russian literature, films, and reportage, and his findings that the Soviet Jew is not just a minority, but an ambivalent character navigating between the Jewish past and Bolshevik future.

In November, the Program returned to hosting in-person events with **Dr. Sophie Fetthauer** of the University of Hamburg. Her talk, entitled "Demarcation and Cooperation: Jewish Cantors in Shanghai Exile," detailed her extensive research on the lives of musicians and cantors exiled in Shanghai during World War II. Her guest lecture complemented the November performances on campus of **Shanghai Sonatas**, on which she acted as a historical consultant.

Also in November, and in partnership with the European Studies Program and the Department of History, the Program welcomed **Dr. Till van Rahden** to campus for a guest lecture entitled "When, How, and Why Did Jews Become a 'Minority'? Remapping Difference in Central Europe, 1815-1919."

Also during the fall semester, the Program created a new internship with generous support from the **Frank and Yetta Chaiken Foundation**. The inaugural Yetta Chaiken

Oral History Internship Program at the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware will see two student interns working with the JHSD Archivist to conduct and record oral histories of prominent Jewish Delawareans during the Spring 2023 semester.

Looking ahead, the Program is proud to serve as a partner to One Book, One Jewish Community, co-sponsored by Gratz College and Drexel University, in presenting a live Zoom book talk on March 13, 2023 by author Matti Friedman on his most recent publication *Who By Fire: Leonard Cohen in the Sinai* (Spiegel & Grau, 2022).

Recordings of many of these events, as well as information about our future events, are available on our newly redesigned website at udel.edu/jsp.

Polly Zavadivker
Director, Jewish Studies Program

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: RACHEL MILBERG



Rachel on the steps of Memorial Hall, Spring 2020

My name is **Rachel Milberg** and I graduated from the University of Delaware in the spring of 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology and a minor in Jewish Studies. I am so honored the Jewish

Studies Program is featuring me in the alumni spotlight this year, as this program was pivotal to my growth as both a student and a professional. After graduating from UD, I moved to Philadelphia and began the Master's Program at Drexel University in Couple and Family Therapy.

The Jewish Studies Program taught me about reaching for my goals, staying informed, and finding passion and purpose

in what I am learning and creating. This Program, especially Dr. Zavadvikver, made me feel supported in my educational goals, and allowed me to follow my interests with guidance and encouragement. While doing my honors enrichment project on Holocaust education in Poland and Germany, I learned so much about historical and intergenerational trauma and how it impacts families and communities.

This experience directly contributed to my interest in working with people in the mental health field. Since starting my master's, I have had the privilege of working with individuals, families, and couples providing therapeutic support and space for emotional processing, healing, and growth. I have been able to take extremely interesting classes, and

gain experience working directly in the field, for which I am so grateful. In my free time, I love to see live music, read and paint, spend time with friends in the city, and chill with my new kitty at home! I feel so grateful for the foundation that UD gave me and am looking forward to finishing my master's and becoming a full-time therapist.



Rachel enjoying her time in Philadelphia, 2022

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: TARA SILBERG



Tara at her graduation from University of Glasgow, 2022

Since graduating from UD in December of 2020, I moved across the pond and earned my Master's degree of Science in Human Rights and International Politics from the University of Glasgow in the UK. Alongside my degree I completed a research dissertation on "The Effects of Intergenerational Trauma on the Lives of Children of Holocaust Survivors" which I am working on publishing!

In March 2022, following the Ukraine invasion, I worked in a volunteer capacity in Warsaw and assisted child refugees coming from Ukraine to Poland. Additionally, I worked with the Union of Jewish Students in the UK, and we collectively received the Volunteer of the Year award from that organization. I also worked with the

Glasgow Jewish Representative Council in planning and executing a Yom HaShoah Remembrance Day event for the community.

Today, I am the Lead Educator of Jewish nonprofit ShadowLight where I travel on tour with an immersive Holocaust education exhibit throughout North America discussing the subject of intolerance and hate today through the telling of Holocaust survivors' stories and educational history on film. I work each day with high school and university students to get the conversation started on how today's generation can learn from the past and become changemakers of the future. Following this tour, I hope to continue my work in the Jewish nonprofit field, as well as pursuing a PhD focused on intergenerational trauma.

The Jewish Studies Program prepared me for my current position as Lead Educator by providing me with a plethora of areas to study during my four years at UD. The Comparative Genocide course brought me to the idea that I wanted to learn more about human rights

and work in the field, while courses like Women in Judaism gave me greater, more diverse knowledge. This provided a solid foundation for working with students on the tour who have questions about specific groups and wish to relate to subjects while still learning about the differences of the past. Similarly, alongside my Master's degree, the course on Modern Israel prepared me for more politically-focused discussions about Judaism, particularly when working on university campuses throughout the United States today. Ultimately, the Jewish Studies Program allowed me to feel passionate and excited about what I was learning while also enabling me to focus on my major of

Human Services. With such supportive professors and faculty within the program I found my way to a career incorporating both my major and minor, leading me to where I am today. I can truly say that each semester at UD, I felt my new Jewish Studies class was an academic treat and I hope those of future generations have the chance to feel the same with such an amazing program.



Tara during the Twilight Induction Ceremony for UD Freshmen, Fall 2017

DR. VIVIAN Z. KLAFF MEMORIAL AWARD WINNERS 2022



Rafi during graduation, Spring 2022

Rafi Turitz-Sweifach graduated from UD in spring 2022 with a degree in Economics and minors in Jewish Studies, Business Administration, and History. Below, Rafi discusses his time at UD and his experiences in the Jewish Studies minor.

In my undergraduate career, I was very involved in Hillel on campus, acting as the president of Hillel student life and member of the Hillel Board of Directors for one year. Additionally, I was very involved in UD's business school, serving as a Lerner Ambassador during which I gave tours and sat on panels for prospective students as well as a member of the Lerner Student Advisory Board. I was a TA for two upper-level classes, one in the economics department and another in the business administration department. I was also a tutor for my last two years of college.

When I think back on my undergraduate career and my favorite classes that I have taken, many

of those classes were the courses that I took as a Jewish Studies minor. I took a wide variety of courses, ranging from Dr. Zavadivker's Women in Judaism to Roger Horowitz's Jews and Food to Leslie Reidel's Jews and American Pop Culture, all of which provided me with amazing educational experiences. I was even able to get credit towards my minor by studying abroad with Birthright and learning more about Israel and Judaism while enjoying an incredible trip! The Jewish Studies minor gave me the flexibility to pursue my interests and take my Jewish learning into my own hands, and I am incredibly thankful for that!

In late August, I began my graduate studies at UD. I am enrolled in a dual master's program, pursuing an MBA and MS Business Analytics and Information Management. I am also the graduate intern for the Deputy Dean of the business school, Dr. Sheryl Kline. I am helping her with her classes, assisting her in bringing in amazing speakers within the hospitality industry, and working on the logistics-side of the business school's recruitment events for prospective students. I am extremely excited by the work I am doing with her! In addition, I am a member of the MBA Student Association, and I am excited to continue to get more involved in different areas of graduate life at UD! Lastly, my UD experience would not be complete without Hillel, so you can find me there regularly for Shabbat dinners!

Dalia Handelman studied Interpersonal Communication and Jewish Studies at UD, where she was also a member of the World Scholars program. During her time at UD, she worked with Professor Roger Horowitz and the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware

to complete a summer internship in 2019, collecting oral histories of prominent Jewish Delawareans. These interviews are available on the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware's website. Upon graduating in spring 2022, Dalia was chosen as one of the 2022/23 Jewish Service Corps Fellows. The Jewish Service Corps Fellowship is funded through the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

Dalia is serving in Krakow, Poland where she is spending her year-long fellowship working at the Jewish Community Center of Krakow. At the Jewish Community Center, Dalia is helping rebuild Jewish life in Poland, as well as working on the JCC's Ukrainian refugee aid response. Dalia is largely responsible for external relations. Dalia coordinates and manages the international volunteers who come to assist with the Ukrainian refugee crisis, she works closely with major donors, is part of the Ride For The Living team, which is the biggest fundraising event, and much more.



Dalia in Krakow, Poland, Fall 2022

UKRAINE IN THE ARCHIVES: ORAL HISTORIES OF UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS



By **Rebecca Johnson Melvin**
Manuscripts Librarian, University of Delaware
Library, Museums and Press

In the early 20th century, 150 families lived in "Little Ukraine," an immigrant community in Wilmington that was anchored by two Ukrainian churches* and an active National Ukrainian Association on Heald Street in Southbridge.

Ten of the men and women who made the pre-World War I emigration from Ukraine to the United States and eventually settled in Wilmington are represented in the Delaware Oral History collection. The collection is a

UKRAINE IN THE ARCHIVES: ORAL HISTORIES OF UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS

result of a 1970s project by UD's Department of History, directed by John Munroe and funded by Robert H. Richards Jr. The digitized audio recordings and transcripts of more than 300 interviews are available online in UDSpace.

The Ukrainian oral histories in the collection represent the voices of one of Wilmington's important immigrant groups at the turn of the 20th century, connecting us to Ukrainian history. These voices include:

- Anna Bakomenko
- Anastasia Bosik
- Goldie (Olga) Kagel
- Harry Kosowsky
- Mary Macey
- Eva Markow
- Mary Poczynak
- Steven Syncyzyn
- Catherine Sztokiewicz
- Mychailo Zaniczkowsky

Born in the late 1890s, these 10 individuals arrived in the United States before 1914, when war broke out in Europe, which made return to the "old country" difficult. Several planned to stay only a few years, gaining experience and money to take back home while they were young.

All but one of these interviewees were youth from family farms. There were typically six to ten children in their families, and from about the age of seven, all would work in the fields to plant and harvest potatoes and wheat, or herd cows and horses in pastures. Their schooling was seasonal. They averaged about six years of schooling, with often no more than three hours per day in order to finish morning chores.

Eva Markow said she came to America "to make a better living." Steven Syncyzyn said his "reason was very simple. We didn't have anything to live on. All we had was what we could grow on our land. We had no money for buying salt, no money or oil for the lamps. If a chicken laid an egg, we had to sell it. Life was very difficult. It's much easier here."

In addition to aunts, uncles, older siblings and village friends who sent letters home, agents actively recruited villagers to immigrate to Germany or the United States. These agents

coordinated tickets and traveling companions, sometimes four or five from the same village, while relatives often paid for passage. Mary Macey said her cousin told her that life was good in New York. "You don't have to carry water there," she recalled, and that houses had electricity and gas.

Most of the Ukrainians interviewed in this oral history project came from small villages in Galicia on the border of Poland, near Przemyśl, which has recently been in the news for its train station that has served as a major refugee

she had waited two years before a Jewish immigration society aided her family, who were escaping Russian pogroms.

Other interviewees mentioned political oppression and losing track of families back in the villages during the war, sometimes never learning where their relatives were. Mychailo Zaniczkowsky explained his decision not to go back to Ukraine after the war. "The Soviets were very hard on Ukrainians," he said. "I had brothers there, and they had no freedom. They have a hard life there."

Many of the immigrants learned the English language through night schools in Wilmington. When night school conflicted with her custodial shift in the duPont office buildings, Catherine Sztokiewicz joined five other women who had arranged for a daytime language tutor.

The individuals all worked, even when raising large families of their own in America. They worked for the railroad and in a felt factory (in Newburgh, New York). They would tan leather, roll cigars, clean the Hotel du Pont, do laundry, and take in boarders. Harry Kosowsky worked as a butcher before establishing his own store, which became a cornerstone of the community.

As more African Americans moved into the area in the late 1960s, "Little Ukraine" in Wilmington came to be called "Black Ukraine." Both of the Ukrainian churches relocated to other parts of the city, representing a population shift. There was a second wave of Ukrainian immigration after the Second World War, and another wave after the breakup of the Soviet Union in the 1990s.

The churches continue as cultural centers for the community, responding to the recent Russian invasion with acute knowledge of a long history of tension in the region.

*St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, a Byzantine Catholic Church in spiritual communion with the Pope of Rome, was established in 1909. A schism in the 1920s led to the establishment of a second church, Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which held spiritual communion with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, successor to the Apostle Andrew.



Tatianna Kressa.

Tatianna Kressa, a member of the Ukrainian community of Wilmington, circa 1918, in a community demonstration of support for Ukraine

gateway from the Russian invasion. These individuals told stories of long train rides to port cities, such as Bremen or Hamburg, where they began ocean travel that lasted from six to 14 days before arriving in New York.

Goldie Kagel, a Jewish Ukrainian immigrant and the only interviewee who came after 1914, arrived in Montreal, Canada, before making her way to Wilmington via West Chester. She had departed from Constanta, Romania, where

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. EYNAT GUTMAN

Dr. Eynat Gutman has been teaching full-time for the department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and the Program in Jewish Studies since 2007. Dr. Gutman received her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Delaware in 1999. As a graduate student, and later on, in the years prior to her full-time appointment, she had taught various levels of Hebrew, including independent studies for the more advanced students, in areas as broad as Hebrew grammar, conversation, film and literature.

Dr. Gutman developed her own Hebrew language curriculum for levels I –IV (Hebrew 105, 106, 107 and 205), because she did not find one book that would serve her students in an optimal way. With the help of existing books and other sources (for teaching reading, grammar, texts and songs), she built a program based on themes that would be relevant to the university student, as well as to any learner in general. She has been using this curriculum successfully for many years, introducing changes as well as incorporating more technology into the program as needed.

With her full-time appointment in 2007, Dr. Gutman started introducing courses in Israeli Culture and Civilization into her program. In 2010, she got accepted into the prestigious Summer Institute for Israel Studies (SIIS), which trains professors from all over the world to teach courses in Israel Studies. The three-and-a-half week long summer institute at Brandeis University (Waltham, MA) and in Israel proved tremendous for her professional development. Between 2008 and 2015, Dr. Gutman developed three Israeli culture courses in translation: Modern Israel: History and Culture, Israeli Film: Reflecting Dramatic Change, and Tales of Love and Darkness (Jewish and Arab-Israeli Fiction). Teaching these courses,



in addition to her Hebrew language classes, has provided her with much professional satisfaction.

After her early career years, Dr. Gutman shifted her research interests from comparative linguistic discourse to Israeli culture. Specifically, she spent some time studying second-generation Israeli filmmakers, and recently, she has been looking at identity issues among Arab-Israeli writers. In June 2022, she gave a presentation titled “Inequity and Issues of Identity-Crisis Among Arab Israelis in Sayed Kashua’s Second Person Singular” (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel).

After so many years in the U.S., Dr. Gutman finds that teaching Israeli language and culture helps her stay connected with her birth country. Most of her family lives in Israel, and she keeps her connection with the country as current as she can through her annual visits.

FACULTY NEWS

Polly Zavadviker (History) has spent the past year working on the final stages of her manuscript entitled *A Nation of Refugees: World War I and Russia’s Jews*, under contract with Oxford University Press. In addition to directing the Jewish Studies Program at UD, she took part in several campus-wide events that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including “Mauled by the Bear,” in late February; and more recently, spoke at the Nobel Prize presentations on November 1 about the Peace Prize laureates Ales Bialiatski of Belarus, the Center of Civil Liberties in Ukraine, and Memorial Society in Russia. In response to the war, she also created and taught a new course in Fall 2022 called “Ukraine and Russia: A Long Road to War” (offered as HIST339), which filled to capacity and will be offered again in Fall 2023.

Sarah Wasserman (English) began serving as the Director for the Center of Material Culture Studies in September. She recently published an essay in *American Literary History* about contemporary auto-fiction, as well as an essay about millennial culture in *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Sarah co-edited a cluster of graduate student essays about material culture and literary studies for the Stanford Arcade site. She continues to serve as a host for the *Novel Dialogue* podcast, and her episode with Professor Brent Edwards and Translator Jean-Baptiste Naudy discussing the work of Claude McKay aired on November 3. Her first book, *The Death of Things*, was reviewed in *The Nation* and short-listed for the Modernist Studies Association first book award and ASU’s Institute for Humanities Research book award.

jspnews

THE JEWISH STUDIES
PROGRAM AT UD
WINTER 2023

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SPRING 2023 COURSES

LITERATURE & CULTURE

ENGL/JWST202

Biblical and Classical Literature

Instructor: Kristen Poole, kpoole@udel.edu

TR 9:30 – 10:45

THEA/JWST212

Jews and American Pop Culture

Instructor: Leslie Reidel

TR 9:30 – 10:45

LLCU/JWST335

**Love and Darkness: Israel in Jewish
and Arab-Israeli Fiction**

Instructor: Eynat Gutman

TR 11:00 – 12:15

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

JWST101

What is Judaism?

Instructor: Polly Zavadiivker, pollyz@udel.edu

MW 3:35 – 4:50 hybrid

PHIL204

World Religions

Instructor: Alan Fox, afox@udel.edu

MWF 10:10 – 11:00

PHIL/JWST302

**Introduction to
Jewish Mysticism**

Instructor: Karl Hein, hein@udel.edu

MW 3:35 – 4:50, online synchronous

HISTORY & POLITICS

HIST/JWST254

Jewish Holocaust 1933-1945

Instructors: Polly Zavadiivker, pollyz@udel.edu;

Devon Miller-Duggan, dmd@udel.edu

MWF 11:15 – 12:05

HIST/JWST304

Jews and Food

Instructor: Roger Horowitz, rh@udel.edu

M 6:00 – 9:00

HIST380/JWST381

History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Instructor: Rudi Matthee, matthee@udel.edu

MWF 2:30 – 3:20

POSC/JWST482

America in the Middle East

Instructor: Daniel Green, dgreen@udel.edu

MW 3:35 – 4:50

HEBREW LANGUAGE

HEBR/JWST105

Hebrew I

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

MW 1:25 – 2:15, TR 2:00 – 2:50

HEBR/JWST106: Hebrew II

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

MW 2:30 – 3:20, TR 3:30 – 4:20