

Kisses to the Children: A Screening with Director Vassilis Loules

On April 27, 2016, the Jewish Studies Program, along with the European Studies Program, UD Hillel Student Life and the Greek community of Delaware, sponsored a screening of the documentary *Kisses to the Children* and a Q & A session with Greek director Vassilis Loules. This documentary highlights the hidden children of Greece during World War II. The five children featured in the film are all Greek Jews saved by Christians during the Nazi occupation of Greece. When speaking about the film, Loules



indicated that his original inspiration was found at the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens, where he saw the exhibit "Hidden Children in Occupied Greece" in 2005. He spoke about how seeing the artifacts in the exhibit, especially the toys and photos, motivated him to create *Kisses to the Children*. This inspiration is evident in

the film as the individuals expressed the true pain of having to leave behind their homes and their toys, notably a rocking horse and a doll, in exchange for survival. He spent the next seven years researching the subject, locating the children and conducting interviews. In all, he communicated with about forty individ-

uals who survived the occupation as hidden children, finally selecting the five who would be featured in the film. Those five individuals are Rosina Asser-Pardo, Iossif Ventura, Eftyhia Nachman-Nachmia, Shelly Kounio-Cohen and Marios Soussis, and each one shared their stories of struggle, survival and guilt in the documentary. *Kisses to the Children* has been well-received since its premiere in 2012, having received numerous awards, and it has been featured on three tours across U.S. campuses.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Sarah Wasserman

I am an assistant professor in the English department at the University of Delaware. Prior to joining UD this past fall, I was an assistant professor at the JFK Institute of North American Studies in Berlin, Germany. I received my Ph.D. from the department of English at Princeton University and an M.A. in Humanities from the University of Chicago. Before doing all of that, I studied biology and worked in material sciences. That may seem a far cry from teaching literature, but I find that having this background helps me see how many bridges there are to be built between disciplines. The literature classroom, for me, is a lab space—a room where

curious researchers collaborate, take risks, and engage closely with texts in order to discover how the works we read make meaning and move us.

In addition to teaching in the Jewish Studies program, I teach and study 20th and 21st century American literature, material culture studies, critical theory, and digital humanities. I am currently at work on a book entitled *The Death of Things: Ephemera in America*, which examines literary representations of ephemeral objects in American culture from the beginning of the twentieth century until today. Because ephemera can speak to the fleeting,

waning, or broken promises of American modernity, they figure prominently in Jewish American historical fiction about the Second World War. I have a chapter, for instance, on how the disappearing objects of the 1939 New York World's Fair appear in novels by Michael Chabon and E.L. Doctorow. In these stories, the Fairs' ephemera speak not only to the exuberant visions of American innovation, but also to the horrors unfolding overseas.

As a scholar of American fiction, I'm especially interested in how Jewish authors have navigated the tricky intersections of national, ethnic, and religious identity.

When I teach Contemporary Jewish American fiction this fall, I'll be asking the students to think about the way that Jewish stories have become American stories—whether we realize it or not. Jewish authors such as Philip Roth, Nathan Englander, and Deborah Eisenberg reflect on the way Jewish Americans are major players in our culture but frequently remain invisible or marginal. In my course, I look forward to exploring a rich array of texts; from graphic novels like Art Spiegelman's *Maus* to the song lyrics of Bob Dylan, there's no shortage of captivating stories and forms that help us think about our relationship to difference in this country.



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Spring 2016

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM @ UD

From the Director

It is truly exciting to report on the Jewish Studies Program's most recent developments and accomplishments. The Program's growth has gained momentum on all fronts, attracting increasing numbers of students and faculty members at UD to the study and teaching of Jewish culture, history and the Hebrew language.

The number of students enrolled in the Jewish Studies Minor continued to expand in Spring 2016, growing by 25% during the spring semester. Student interest in Jewish Studies courses has also grown. Our one-unit Spring Lecture Series course, JWST 201, on the theme "Jewish Culture and Society in Global Perspective," enrolled 25 students, up from 6 students who took the course in Spring 2015. The lecture series featured a dozen scholars who presented cutting-edge research that collectively drew attention to the diverse patterns of settlement, culture, and interethnic encounters that have characterized Jewish history from ancient times to the present.

The addition of new faculty and courses in the coming year will surely continue to spark greater interest in the study of Jewish culture, history and languages. In Fall 2016, new faculty member Sarah Wasserman of the English Department will teach ENGL/JWST348: Contemporary Jewish-American Literature. By the end of the pre-registration period in early May, the course was completely filled and closed. A brief profile of Professor Wasserman appears inside of this newsletter.



Michael Frassetto. In HIST/JWST398: Jews Under Cross and Crescent, students will explore the history of encounters between Jews, Muslims, and Christians in medieval Europe. We are pleased to be able to offer a topic of potential interest

In another very exciting development, in Spring 2017 we will welcome Dr. Roger Horowitz as a new faculty member in the Program. Dr. Horowitz has taught graduate courses on the history of capitalism for many years in UD's History Department and also serves as Director of the Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington. A prolific scholar, he is the author of the new book *Kosher USA: How Coke Became Kosher and other Tales of Modern Food*, published in April by Columbia University Press. Dr. Horowitz will offer a new Jewish Studies and History course on the global history of Jewish food, a topic that will surely draw students from across many disciplines and colleges at the university.

Please read on to learn more about the recent accomplishments of our students and faculty, as well as our upcoming courses, new Special Collections materials, and innovative public programs.

—Polly Zavadivker

Dr. Vivian Z. Klaff Memorial Award Winners

Each spring semester, two graduating seniors are selected as Dr. Vivian Z. Klaff Memorial Award winners. This award is named for the late Professor Emeritus of Sociology and former director of the Jewish Studies program. The two student winners, Julie Meyer and Jessica Oestreicher, have demonstrated excellence within the Jewish Studies minor during their college careers. Below, the students explain what the Jewish Studies minor has meant to them and discuss their plans for the future.



Jessica Oestreicher

I am a senior history major with a minor in Jewish Studies. I have been a Resident Assistant in the Christiana Towers for three years. In addition, I serve on the Office of Student Conduct Undergraduate Appellate Board and as a victim advocate for Sexual Offense Support.

I place great value on learning about traditions and the various experiences of the Jewish people across time and place. The Jewish Studies minor provided an opportunity for me to fulfill those interests and connect with Judaism in new and important ways during my time in college. Being involved with the Program also helped ease the transition of being away from home by connecting me to a new Jewish community. The feeling of kinship I found through the Program shaped



Julie Meyer

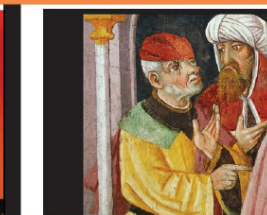
I'm really thankful for the Jewish Studies minor because it gave me the opportunity to pursue my Jewish education in college. I was able to take this even further and study abroad in Tel Aviv for a semester for a hands-on experience. The courses gave me great insight and challenged me as a Jewish

thinker. After graduation, I will begin working at Hebrew Public in New York City. Hebrew Public is a non-profit organization that develops public charter schools all around the country that offer a dual language program to students from all different backgrounds, in Hebrew and English as well as an in-depth curriculum in Israeli culture. I will be the Manager of Philanthropic Initiative, which will involve working to achieve fundraising goals! I have always dreamed of pursuing a career in the non-profit sector, so I am really excited to combine my passion for Israel with my Communications degree in the next chapter of my life.

Featured Fall Course: HIST398/JWST398

MW 3:35-4:50
Limit 35
Dr. Michael Frassetto

TOPICS IN
MIEVEAL HISTORY:
JEW UNDER
CROSS & CRESCENT



HIST398-010 / JWST398-010

In Fall 2016 we will also offer a Jewish history course on the medieval period, taught by the very popular History Department instructor Dr.

will allow us to expand the Program's curriculum to include the medieval and early modern periods in future semesters.

Jewish Studies at UD's Special Collections

Marie Jucht Kaufman (1930-1994) documented her survival of the Holocaust through letters written to her

son, American writer and artist Alan Kaufman, between 1993 and 1994. The collection of her letters at the Hugh M. Morris Li-

brary also includes photographs of the Jucht family during and after World War II, as well as photocopies of Marie Kaufman's naturalization documents from France, Venezuela, and the United States.

In 1993, Mr. Kaufman asked his mother to detail her and her family's survival account. Beginning in 1993, Marie Kaufman wrote 33 letters, the last of which was written in May 1994. In the letters, she recounted her and her family's harrowing experiences hiding from the Nazis, the French State gendarmes, and the Italian Black Brigades (also known as Black Shirts) between 1942 and 1944.

The letters provide a first-hand account of a French-Jewish family's survival in World War II France and Italy. Marie Kaufman's testimony not only recounts in

detail events she witnessed but also reflects on her own Jewishness and the kindness of many of the French and Italian people who aided her family and those with whom they traveled.

Of his mother's letters, Alan Kaufman wrote: "The narrator of the letters is a keen observer, unashamed of her uncertainty, frank about her despair, but also extraordinarily resolute in her desire to live, and her faith in human goodness: her belief despite all evidence to the contrary that good itself still exists. But she is unflinching in her observations of the cowardice, delusion and brutality raging all around her, and these, too, make the letters remarkable."

Marie Kaufman's letters and documents are available for view at Morris Library.

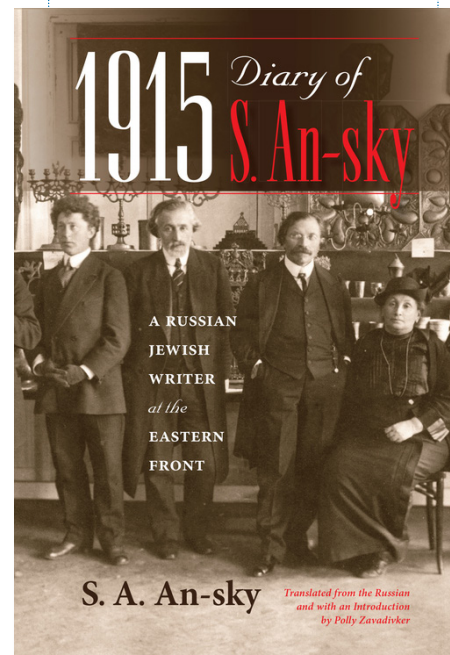


Faculty Research Spotlight: Dr. Polly Zavadivker

Published in March of this year, Dr. Polly Zavadivker's new book, *1915 Diary of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Writer at the Eastern Front*, features the translated writings of Schloyme-Zanvil Rapoport, a Russian Jewish writer, ethnographer, and cultural and political activist. This book is available on Amazon.com.

S. An-sky was by the time of the First World War a well-known writer, a longtime revolutionary, and an ethnographer who pioneered the collection of Jewish folklore in Russia's Pale of Settlement. In 1915, An-sky took on the assignment of providing aid and relief to Jewish civilians

trapped under Russian military occupation in Galicia. As he made his way through the shtetls there, close to the Austrian frontlines, he kept a diary of his encounters and impressions, written in Russian. His diary entries present a detailed reflection of his daily experiences. He describes conversations with wounded soldiers in hospitals, fellow Russian and Jewish aid workers, Russian military and civilian authorities, and Jewish civilians in Galicia and parts of the Pale. Although most of his diaries were lost, two fragments survived and are preserved



in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art. Dr. Zavadivker translated and annotated the fragments of the diary, conveying An-sky's vivid first-hand descriptions of civilian and military life in wartime. He recorded the brutality and violence against the civilian population, the complexities of interethnic relations, the practices and limitations of philanthropy and medical care, Russification policies, and antisemitism. In the late 1910s, An-sky used his diaries as raw material for a lengthy memoir in Yiddish published under the title *The Destruction of Galicia*.

Student Spotlight: Toni Pitock

Toni Pitock, a Ph.D. student in the History Department, obtained her B.A. in English and Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, her M.Sc. in Early Childhood Education at the University of Pennsylvania and her M.A. in History at Villanova University. She came to the University of Delaware in 2008 to pursue her Ph.D. in History, and recently defended her dissertation, "Commerce and Connection: Jewish Merchants, Philadelphia, and the Atlantic World, 1738-1822." Toni received her Ph.D. at the May commencement.

During her time at UD, Toni has acted as a teaching assistant for numerous classes, including HIST 104: World History II, HIST 205: United States History until 1865, HIST 206: United States History from 1860 and HIST 254: Jewish Holocaust. She has also taught her own HIST 206 class.

In 2012 and 2013, Toni organized the Jewish Studies Lecture series for the JWST 201 course, as well as the History Department's Professional Development Series for graduate students. Below, she discusses her time at UD and experiences with Jewish Studies.

Toni Pitock's Statement

I was attracted to UD because I liked the History Ph.D. program and the faculty in the History department. The University's proximity to Philadelphia was also a factor: I knew I would need to spend a lot of time in Philadelphia archives. The program provided great opportunities including stimulating coursework, opportunities to teach, and interesting lectures.

Outside of UD, I participate in an ongoing project to preserve Jamaica's Jewish history. I travel to Jamaica each year to work with



a group to record information on the gravestones in the Jewish cemeteries.

My dissertation, "Commerce and Connection: Jewish Merchants, Philadelphia, and the Atlantic World, 1738-1822," focuses on Philadelphia's early Jewish merchants. Over the course of two generations, Jewish newcomers and their American-born sons participated in Atlantic and western trade, land speculation, army supply, and they invested in corporations aimed at internal development. In these enterprises they cooperated with Jews and non-Jews, and I examine both sets of relationships. Eth-

no-religious bonds and kinship relationships promoted trust, but they did not ensure honesty or cooperation in business. Merchants never allowed ethno-religious bonds to override their commercial judgment and interests, and they kept some Jews at arm's length, sued others, and even cut off close relatives. At the same time, shared economic enterprises brought Jews and non-Jews together in ventures and partnerships that were often long lasting and could bring mutual economic success. Their relationships with their Jewish and non-Jewish colleagues sheds light on multiple layers of what it meant to be Jewish at the time. Jews in Philadelphia used their economic endeavors and cultural relationships to flourish in the city, but they also found themselves treated as "citizen others" on the periphery of all citizens.

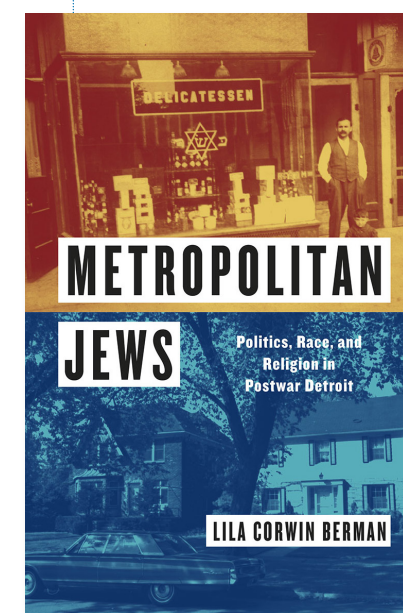
JWST 201 Lecture Series: Dr. Lila Corwin Berman



The Jewish Studies 201 course is a lecture series that occurs every spring semester and is the only class in the curriculum that is a requirement for the Jewish Studies minor. Each spring, scholars come to campus to lecture about a topic related to the series' theme. For Spring

2016, the theme of the course was "Jewish Culture and Society in Global Perspective," and there were 12 lectures throughout the semester. The lecture on April 27th was given by Temple University's Associate Professor of History Dr. Lila Corwin Berman and was entitled "Metropolitan Jews: Race, Religion and Politics in Postwar Detroit." This lecture highlighted the research and materials covered in Dr. Berman's book of the same name. In her lecture, she discussed the trend of "white flight" from the urban center of Detroit following World War II and discussed the roles that Detroit's Jews played and

the moves that they made during this time period. While the Jews did move out of the urban center, they remained on the outskirts, in the suburbs, and continued to take an interest in the urban life and community that Detroit had fostered for them. Covering such complex issues as race, religion, social and economic status, and equality, Dr. Berman explored the ways in which Jews of Detroit constructed their world and views based on location. Her book is now available on Amazon.com.



Spring 2016 Courses

Religion and Philosophy

JWST101: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM
TR 9:30-10:45am

Instructor: Micah Becker-Klein, rabbimicah@bede.org
Satisfies breadth requirement B

This course will introduce students to some of the different ways Judaism can be explored and appreciated through its political history, the intellectual history of its values and thinkers, the way it is lived as a modern religious faith tradition with ancient biblical roots, and through the prism of different cultural arts.

PHIL/JWST 208: INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH PHILOSOPHY
TR 3:30 - 4:45

Instructor: Rabbi Eli Gurevitz, rabbieli@udel.edu
Satisfies University multicultural requirement

This course examines fundamental issues in philosophy of religion reflecting both general theological approaches to resolving the tension between philosophy and religion and the uniquely Jewish attempt to do so. Topics include: God, miracles, good and evil, divine commandments and free will.

Hebrew Language

HEBR/JWST 105: ELEMENTARY HEBREW
MW 1:25 - 2:15 & TR 2:00 - 2:50

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Introduction to the Hebrew alphabet and language, and development of basic speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

HEBR/JWST 107: INTERMEDIATE HEBREW
MW 2:30 - 3:20 & TR 3:30 - 4:20
Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Strengthening grammar skills, continued practice in speaking, listening, writing and reading through conversation, texts and songs.

Literature & Culture

ENGL/JWST 202: BIBLICAL & CLASSICAL LITERATURE
TR 2:00 - 3:15

Instructor: Miranda Wilson, wilsonm@udel.edu
Satisfies breadth requirement A Satisfies University multicultural requirement

This course provides the opportunity to study Greek, Roman, and Biblical literatures, set in their mythical, historical and cultural contexts, introducing appropriate critical concepts.

LLCU/JWST 345: MODERN ISRAEL: HISTORY & CULTURE
TR 11:00 - 12:15

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Many factors contribute to a diverse and intriguing Israeli society. Topics include the roots of Zionism, the concept of the Israeli Sabra, the effects of the Holocaust, ethnic groups and the Arab Israeli conflict, through history, film, literature and music.

ENGL/JWST 348: CONTEMPORARY JEWISH-AMERICAN LITERATURE
TR 12:30 - 1:45

Instructor: Sarah Wasserman, swasser@udel.edu
Satisfies breadth requirement A Satisfies A&S writing requirement

Lectures and discussions of outstanding contemporary Jewish American novelists, short story writers, and others.

History & Politics

HIST/JWST 250: COMPARATIVE GENOCIDE - TR 2:00 - 3:15

Instructor: Polly Zavadivker, pollyz@udel.edu
Satisfies breadth requirement B

This course provides an introduction to the study of genocide and mass killing during the 20th Century in comparative and historical perspective. The cases examined in the course include the mass murder of Armenians, European Jews, Soviet ethnic and political groups, Cambodians, Rwandans and former Yugoslav nationalities.

HIST/JWST 327: TOPICS IN JEWISH HISTORY: ANTI-SEMITISM
TR 11:00 - 12:15

Instructor: Polly Zavadivker, pollyz@udel.edu
Satisfies breadth requirement B Satisfies University multicultural requirement

Explore the changing nature of anti-Jewish hatred from ancient times to the present. Topics include: anti-Jewish myths in ancient and medieval times, modern racial antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and anti-Zionism on American college campuses today.

HIST/JWST 398: TOPICS IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY: MEDIEVAL JEWS, MUSLIMS & CHRISTIANS
MW 3:35 - 4:50

Instructor: Michael Frassetto, frassetto@udel.edu

This course will explore the relationship between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle Ages. It will investigate patterns of co-existence, violence, and intolerance that characterized those relationships.

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THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM @ UD
SPRING 2016

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