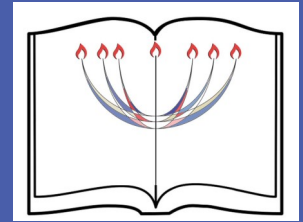


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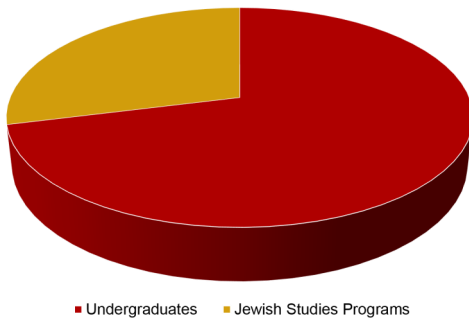
SMU Jewish Studies Update



AY 2017-2018 v. 6

From the Director

Jewish Studies provided another year of engaging courses to undergraduates as well as innovative co-curricular programs to the entire DFW community. How far we have come! In just 4 years, SMUJS has reached 35% of the undergraduate population through 60 classes taught from 5 departments and provided 30 programs through partnerships with 15 SMU departments, programs, and organizations and 10 Dallas-area organizations. Our student



population continues to draw from a broad range of specializations, from business and engineering to psychology and advertising (**Student Spotlight**).

This year featured an exciting alternative spring break trip to Spain as part of a course on *Sacred Spaces in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Students from Rice University joined the SMU class to study the diverse cultures of medieval Spain (**SMU and Rice U. in Spain**).

The fall **Nate and Ann Levine Lecture** welcomed eminent Talmudic scholar from Yale University Christine Hayes who spoke on "What's Divine about Divine Law?" The spring Lecture brought Aaron Lansky, founding Director of the National Yiddish Book Center, who discussed his rescue of over a million Yiddish books at the third annual **One Day Jewish University**.

The highlight of this year's lunch lectures was an exploration of anti-Judaism in the church music of J.S. Bach as presented in Lauren Belfer's novel, *After the Fire* (**Lunch Lecture Explores Intolerance in Bach's Music**).

This fall SMUJS is partnering with the Meadows School of the Arts to bring an exhibit featuring the underground resistance magazine *Vedem* ("Vanguard") produced in the Theresienstadt Nazi camp (**Vedem Underground Exhibit**).

SMU Jewish Studies continues to flourish and expand its programs, but **we urgently need your financial support**. Please make a gift today.

Shira Lander, PhD
Director

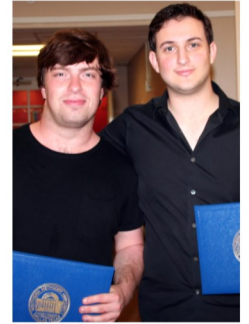
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Student Spotlight

2018 JEWISH STUDIES MINORS

Rob Shapiro, BA Psychology

A graduate of the San Diego Jewish Academy, Rob elected the minor in Jewish Studies to deepen his already rich knowledge of Jewish history, culture, and religion. He earned distinction in his major, as recognized by induction into the Psi Chi psychology honors society.



Rob has a passion for wrist-watches, and gained extensive knowledge about premium time pieces while working in sales at Bachendorf's Jeweler. He plans to attend law school to focus on oil and gas.

Chandler Snipes, BBA Finance

Chandler's interests range from music to sky-diving. As a senior in high school, he founded the Ruux Music Group, which he grew into a nationally-recognized business during his undergraduate career. Despite spending most weekends performing at music festivals around the country, he maintained a rigorous program of study. Chandler participated in the first SMU-in-Israel experience, where he extended his trip to network with business associates in Tel Aviv.

Chandler undertook an independent study of Israeli music, tracing its evolution from the pioneer days of European folk music to its international recognition in the annual Eurovision Song Contest. He will continue his studies at the Cox School of Business in the fall to pursue a Master of Science in Accounting.

The Nate and Ann Levine Lecture Series



Mark your calendar:

Thursday, October 25, 2018 7:30 pm

Doron Ben-Atar and Andrew Pessin, co-authors of
Campus Anti-Zionism: The University, Free Speech, and BDS

“Israel, BDS, and Campus Life:

Complexities of Jewish Identity in the American Academy”

Fall '17 Levine Lecture: Christine Hayes on Divine Law

Hayes, Robert F. and Patricia R. Weis Professor of Religious Studies in Classical Judaica at Yale University, compared the radically different Greek and Jewish notions of divine law. Through an engaging text study, she demonstrated that for the ancient Greeks, divine law was divine by virtue of its inherent qualities of intrinsic rationality, truth, universality, and immutability, while for biblical and rabbinic authors, divine law was considered divine because it was grounded in revelation with no presumption of rationality, conformity to truth, universality, or immutability. The contrast untangled the classical and biblical roots of the Western idea of divine law, accounting for ambiguities that continue to influence legal philosophy.



Spring '18 Levine Lecture: Aaron Lansky on Yiddish Books



Lansky regaled his audience with fascinating stories about his rescue of over a million Yiddish books and his efforts since 2009 to make more than 11,000 titles available online in the National Yiddish Book Center's [Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library](#). Part of the international revival of the Yiddish language, Lansky showed how his efforts helped revitalize what was once a dying vestige of a lost European world. Together with organizations like the YIVO (*yidisher visnshaftlekher institut*) Institute for Jewish Research, the Yiddish Book Center has preserved and promoted the revival of this important Jewish language and culture.

SMU and Rice U. in Spain

For spring break 2018, students traveled with Drs. Danielle Joyner (Art History), Shira Lander (Jewish Studies), and Maya Soifer Irish (History, Rice University) to visit and study sites that bear witness to the vibrant cultures of Jews, Christians, and Muslims of pre-modern Spain. Through their study of synagogues, churches, and mosques, as well as other significant buildings, students learned about the complex realities behind the *convivencia* (coexistence) among members of these three predominant subcultures. The trip was generously funded by the Dedman College Honors Program and the Medieval Studies Program. Students were profoundly transformed by the experience:



“I know I don’t only speak for myself, but I speak for much of the group when I say that this entire experience had a truly life-changing impact.”

“My trip to Spain changed my life.... Traveling to the sacred sites we learned about in class also made them more authentic and personal to me.”

“I was able to immerse myself in Spanish culture, and I got the chance to go back to my own personal Spanish roots. It was especially memorable for me to learn about my heritage while actually in the places where my ancestors descend from.”

Lunch Lecture Explores Intolerance in Bach's Music



Award-winning author Lauren Belfer and musicologist Michael Marissen discussed anti-Jewish themes in the church music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Belfer used fiction to explore the topic in her novel, [*And After the Fire*](#) (Jewish Book Award winner, 2016), and reflected on how she decided which historical characters to incorporate into her work. Marissen, Daniel Underhill Professor Emeritus of Music at Swarthmore College, played excerpts of Bach's music and analyzed librettos that contained negative images of non-Christians, notably Jews and Muslims. The talk ended on a redemptive note, with Marissen pointing out that both the Catholic and Lutheran Churches have repudiated anti-

Judaism as sinful. SMU Perkins School of Theology co-sponsored the talk. In attendance were members of the JCC's Tycher library monthly book club who had read Belfer's novel. They were delighted to meet the author and learn about her creative process.

SMUJS Faculty Highlights

Sabri Ates was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship grant to research his book on Kurdish statelessness.

Rick Cogley (Religious Studies) presented the paper "New England as the New Israel: The Case for and the Case Against" at the *Society of Early Americanists* in St. Louis, March 3, 2018.

Serge Frolov (Religious Studies) co-edited [*Partners with God: Critical and Theological Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*](#) (Claremont Press, 2017) in which he authored the chapter, "Is Form Criticism Compatible with Diachronic Exegesis? Rethinking Genesis 1-2 after Knierim and Sweeney."

Shira Lander (Religious Studies) presented the paper "Spatial Supersession and Conversion of Late Antique Synagogues in North Africa," at the International Symposium: [*Expropriation and Destruction of Synagogues in Late Antiquity. History, Archaeology and Tradition in Context*](#) at the University of Münster, Germany, September 16, 2017.

One Day Jewish University



This year's One Day Jewish University welcomed two SMU professors new to the event, **Rick Halperin**, director of the Embrey Human Rights Program and author of the book, [*No Resting Place: Holocaust Poland*](#) (Embrey Human Rights Program/Terrace Partners, 2017), and **Bianca Lopez**, W.R. Nicholson Endowed Assistant Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Folks from across the DFW metroplex enjoyed classes on Kabbalah, Antisemitism, the biblical book of Jonah, Zionist theology, Sabbath, Modern Jewish Literature, and the Ten Lost Tribes.

Upcoming *Vedem* Underground Exhibit

SMU Jewish Studies is partnering with SMU's Hamon Arts Library to present the award-winning, Smithsonian-endorsed *Vedem* Underground art exhibit. Honoring what has been hailed as "The Dead Poets Society of Terezin," the exhibit tells the story of how a secret society of teenage boys created *Vedem*, the longest running underground magazine in a Nazi camp. Using comics, graphics, artwork, prose and poetry, the exhibit showcases many of the 83 weekly issues of *Vedem*, which totaled 800 pages and was a symbol of protest and rebellion by some of the era's youngest activists. SMU Jewish Studies and the VEDEM Foundation, which created the exhibit, will host an opening reception to the public on **Sunday, September 23 from 4 – 6 pm** in 3210, on the third floor of Hamon Arts Library in the Owen Fine Arts Building. The



Courtesy of the VEDEM Foundation

exhibit will be open to the public from September 24 – December 14, 2018. In coordination with the exhibit, the VEDEM Foundation will also hold workshops for SMU students called the *Museum of Creative Activism*. Using the lessons and themes from *Vedem*, students in SMU's advertising, human rights, history, art and Jewish studies classes will produce their own 'Zines,' or handmade magazines, promoting social justice. The Zines will be displayed in Hamon's Hawn Gallery starting November 20. For more information, contact Hawn Gallery at hawngallery@smu.edu or 214-768-1383.

Thank you to the generous donors whose support makes all of these programs possible.



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